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# Re - Designing Classic Wardrobe Items

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Master's Thesis

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# Master of Arts Thesis Abstract

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Classic wardrobe items are garments most widely used in our modern time; consequently, they exist in the core of our field of fashion. While worn today, their origins date up to two centuries back. Even though worn universally, they were initially Western men's attire, a product of their ideals and their making tradition; tailoring. Due to their origin, they possess a certain kind of aesthetic. The latter is also that of past and present time as well as that of many. All along, their extensive presence, their particular classic characteristics, but especially their ability to adopt a style inspired designers to contribute to them and create variations of them.

In this thesis, I have recognized timeless and universal classic wardrobe items as largely representing my values in fashion design. I also found them connecting me to the previous generations and to other people wearing them. However, most importantly, as a designer, I found them relevant for our times and useful to find and showcase what is specific to my designer identity.

Throughout the thesis, I therefore deal with the phenomenon of classic wardrobe items and their re-designs, both from general to a personal, designer point of view. The thesis explores the chosen topic of classic wardrobe garments and their re-designs both in theory as well as in practice, in which it generates the largest part of the thesis; a fashion collection of 7 classic wardrobe items re-appropriated.

This study defines classics as of certain quality, as timeless and universal, as well as offering a space for re-designing. In addition, it suggests that by re-designing them, designers are confirming classic wardrobe items' value for our society as well as prolonging it.

A personal variation of classic garments is offered, as well as a more general outlook on them; implying these are the items that give us a sense of stability, belonging and sameness for being worn so extensively in the past and especially so in the present.

## KEYWORDS

*classics, re-designing, tailoring, clothing, wardrobe, fashion*

# Preface

While growing up, my small constitution and my desire to wear the same „jeans“ as my „bigger“ schoolmates, required me to visit a village tailor often. Together with the tailor, we would come up with different ideas as to how to create darts every time I would get a new pair of trousers and work on making them as invisible as possible. One could say, I was already then re-designing classic wardrobe items.

At the same time, I began to acquire a great admiration of garments such as a trouser suit, a skirt suit, a white shirt, and a trench-coat. I was witnessing Sunday suits, being made at the tailor's as well as being worn around me, and they gave me the first idea of what fashion is. The image that I have acquired of fashion has since been embedded in my design, as well as an appreciation for a careful and quality clothing construction.

During my early years, I have as a result developed the aesthetic for clothing that was coming from a tradition, seemed at the same time modern, timeless and democratic.



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# Chapter 1

## 1.1 Introduction

For me as for many, classic wardrobe items are synonymous with garments such as; denim trousers, a white T-shirt, a little black dress, a trench coat, leather biker jacket, a suit and the like. My initial fascination with such classic items comes from my past exposure to them and through the craft of tailoring. To me, they represent the aesthetic and values of such making: durability, timelessness, and universality. In addition to classic wardrobe items representing my acquired values and taste, I see them as worn by, and therefore as relevant to, many. For both, being such a big part of our society and my designer expression, as well as for them offering a space for what is specific to my designer language, I got motivated to contribute to them.

In this thesis, I will, therefore, create personal designer variations of classic wardrobe items as well as explain their meaning for us in general and for me, in particular, both in words and illustrated in a fashion collection.

## 1.2 Relevant exhibitions

Recently, from October 1st to January 28th, 2018 an exhibition *Items: Is Fashion Modern?* Curated by Paola Antonelli was on view in MoMA – Museum of Modern Art in New York. This exhibition aimed to confirm the relevance of classic wardrobe items for our society in the past as well as in the present; more specifically the significance of 111 items such as Levi's 501's, a little black dress, a suit, Oxford button-down shirt, Breton shirt, pencil skirt, biker jacket, and other „humble masterpieces“ of fashion design (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017). In addition, it proved and showcased the fashion designer's fascination with these particular items' throughout their existence as well as in our present time. MoMA, for their particular exhibition even commissioned their new designer variations, such as a jumpsuit re-imagined by a young Irish fashion designer, Richard Malone (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017).

Other two exhibitions related to a discussion on „re-designing classic wardrobe items“ and very relevant for my approach to designing have recently taken place. An exhibition titled „MARGIELA / GALLIERA, 1989-2009“ at the “Musée de la Mode de la Ville de Paris, Palais Galliera and „Margiela, Les années Hermès“ at „La Musée des Arts Décoratifs“ at Rue de Rivoli as well in Paris, France. Both of them were displaying a work of a renowned avant-garde fashion designer Martin Margiela, known for his appreciation of Western men's wardrobe, second-hand and vintage clothing and his continuous re-appropriation of those for a woman's wardrobe.

An exhibition „MARGIELA / GALLIERA, 1989-2009“ on view from March 3rd to July 15th, 2018 acted as a retrospective of designers' work from his Spring – Summer 1989 to Spring – Summer 2009 collection. Garments, such as; a denim coat from his Spring – Summer 1991 collection, made out of a denim trucker jacket and jeans sewn together, as well as a leather biker jacket blown out of its proportion from Spring – Summer 2000 collection; were displayed together with Replicas of vintage clothing from Autumn – Winter 1994 - 1995, as well as with other examples of his re-designs, all chronologically displayed.

The other exhibition, „Margiela, Les années Hermès“ at „La Musée des Arts Décoratifs“ presented Martin Margiela's work for his own label together with

a work created in collaboration with a luxury Parisian fashion house Hermès. Works presented were stretching from the year 1997 to 2003. The exhibition has been initially presented at MoMu in cooperation with Martin Margiela in Antwerp in 2017. It displayed his artisanal, timeless, comfortable and meticulously constructed designs of classic wardrobe for Hermès fashion house, together with his deconstructed, repurposed and oversized wardrobe items for his own fashion brand. A separate space at the exhibition was dedicated to a trench-coat that was either deconstructed, cut, collaged, oversized in Margiela's own style or clean – cut, precisely tailored and constructed in his style for Hermès. An oversized white tuxedo jacket from his Spring – Summer 2000 collection was contrasted with a white sleeveless woolen suit created for the house of Hermès.

## 1.3 Objectives

In the theoretical part of this thesis, I wish to explain what are classic wardrobe items and what does it mean to re-design them. In the practical part, I would like to offer my re-design of selected classic garments and explain my motivation(s) behind it.

In this thesis I will, therefore, be answering the following research questions:

- What are classic wardrobe items?
- What does it mean to re-design them?
- What is my way of re-designing classic wardrobe items?
- What did I mean by re-designing them?

This master's thesis will be theoretical as well as practical, resulting in a book and for the most part in a fashion collection of re-designed classic wardrobe items.

## 1.4 Methods

The research for this thesis was first practiced by collecting classic garments from various second-hand shops and recycling centres, and by observing them. Second, its topic was explored by de-constructing and re-designing them. Overall, I started getting to know the phenomenon of classics in clothing through their physical archetypes and by experimenting with them in my own practice.

Simultaneously while re-making them, I started my visual and literature review on classic items and the phenomenon of their re-designs. I have further developed this review into more thoughtful theoretical research. By it, I was trying to confirm my previous findings on the phenomenon of classics in clothing and their re-interpretations as well as deepen and broaden my understanding of both.

The process of researching my thesis topic, therefore, started through practice, continued both through practice and theory, and concluded with the latter. However, both approaches complemented each other and contributed equally to my understanding of the topic.

This thesis is practice led, according to (Smith & Dean, 2009) among other, for my specialized knowledge in my practice which can for its depth contribute credibly to answering my thesis question; also since its outcome has to a large extent been driven by the practical research.

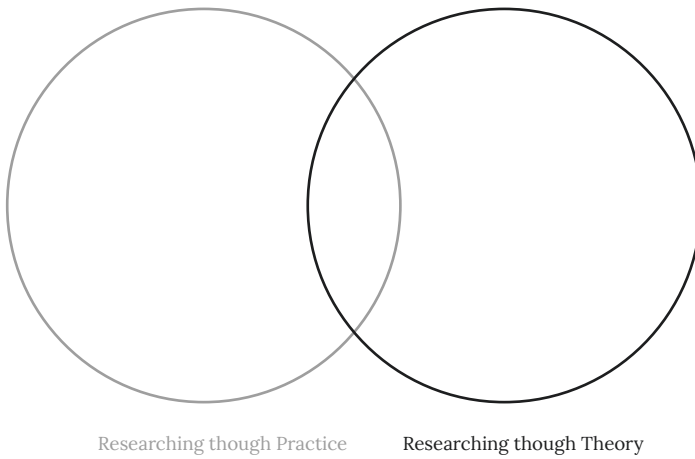


FIGURE 1.  
Research  
methods  
illustrated.

# 1.5 Thesis Overview

This thesis begins with the theory in Chapter 2., offering a general definition of a classic in the context of arts and continues with a more detailed description of it. What follows is an explanation of the artistic practice of re-interpreting classics.

Chapter 3. presents garments that I call classic as well as their re-designs, created throughout their existence. After a common definition of such wardrobe is offered, I present an explanation of the phenomenon of its re-designs.

Following the theoretical part is the practical part in Chapter 4., with a description of a process of making and a presentation of a final collection of selected classic wardrobe items re-designed according to my designer identity.

The concluding Chapter 5. of the thesis discusses the research outcomes of this thesis, both theoretical and practical, as well as the topic's general implication to the times.





# Chapter 2

## Theoretical Part

### 2.1 Classics in Art

#### 2.1.1 Introduction to classics in art

Under this title, I wish to explain how I approached each part of this section and how it led me to answer my thesis questions. Overall, I wished to learn and to explain, what makes classic wardrobe items, classic and what do these garments mean to us. With the aim to discover that, I started researching the meaning of the word classic in arts. I believed such meaning would help me understand classics in design and consequently clothing. What I hoped, would describe most of the meaning of classics in arts was tracing the word back to its origin and following its history of use.

With that, what helped most was Thomas Pavel's definition of Classical in the Encyclopedia of Aesthetics (2014), as well as Ernst Gombrich's use of classical and classic in his book *The Story of Art* (2006). Moreover, I found useful descriptions of the use of the word in the writing; *What is a Classic?* of Charles Augustin Sainte - Beuve (1909-14), and Frank Kermode's *The Classic; Literary Images of Permanence and Change* (1983).

In addition to these sources, various background literature such as; Dictionary definitions of classic and classical helped, such as *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, to *Classical Literature*, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* and of *Art and Artists*, ...With their help, I got the first idea of the multiple and often contradictory meanings of the word classic, deriving from its usage at different times and in various fields of art.

What followed was, me trying to comprehend the connections between all those different meanings and to recognize possible relevance of more than one of them for answering my first thesis question. Adding to these, I became to acknowledge the meaning „typical“, which is an „everyday“ meaning of the word and resulted pondering on its relevance for my research answer.

I don't fully answer my first thesis question; What are classic wardrobe items? until the end of Chapter 2 of my thesis. However, I offer a general definition and other meanings of the classic work of art already under the next title; What is a classic work of art?

I have further based my understanding of; What is a classic work of art? on the writings of people who have already tried to answer this same question, such as Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve in his essay; *What is a Classic?* (1909-14), T.S. Eliot (1945) in his essay with the same title as Sainte - Beuve's, Frank Kermode in his book *The Classic* (1983) and Harold Bloom in *The Western Canon, The Books and School of the Ages* (1994).

Under the title; What is a classic according to Beuve, Eliot, Kermode, and Bloom? I suggest a more detailed definition of a classic work of art through three characteristics that I have recognized as classic from the research done on the phenomenon through their writings. I suggest these characteristics are; Quality, Universality, and Timelessness. At the end of each description of one characteristic, I offer my suggestion as to how each of those should translate to classics in clothing.

Comprehending the phenomenon of classics in art consequently helped me understand the artistic practice of re-interpreting them. Such a way of creating art is similar to re-designing that I have performed in the practical part of this master thesis.

## 2.2 What is a Classic Work of Art?

### 2.2.1 Origin of the word and history of its use

First to use the variation of the word „classic“ were the Romans. They used it to separate what they thought is superior, from the inferior (Kermode, 1983). The adjective „classic“ originated from their phrase „cives classici“, describing first class of Roman male citizens, divided into five classes during the rule of the king Tullius in the mid 5th century BC, (Kermode, 1983; Sainte-Beuve, 1909-14).

Similarly, Aulus Gellius, a second-century author in his book *Number 19*, Chapter 8, Paragraph 15 of „*Noctes Atticae*“ uses the term „classicus“ to describe the writers of the highest class (Oxford Classical Texts, 1968).

„...classicus...scriptor, non proletarius...“ (Oxford Classical Texts, 1968, Book 19, Ch. 8, Para. 15).

A classic writer is opposing the lower class of writers.

Such classic and exemplary author would for its excellence later also serve as a model to others (Kermode, 1983).

Well along, the 15th century Renaissance adopted the use of the Latin word „classicus“ and attributed it to Greek and Roman culture in general, (Pavel, 2014). Through their admiration of Classics - Ancient Greeks and Romans, their ideals and consequently their artistic guides such as Plato's writings on the beauty ideal, Aristotle's *Poetics* and Horace's *Ars Poetica*, distinctive characteristics of a work of art, that praised certain rules, restraint, harmony, balance, clarity of expression and a so called „honest“ representation of the nature of

things, came to be equated with a term classic work of art (Pavel, 2014; Gombrich, 2006).

### 2.2.1.1 *Classic vs. Romantic*

According to Pavel (2014) at the end of 18th century, the opposition to such classic art was created and its movement was called Romanticism. The opposing side favoured a freedom of expression over the clarity and restraint of the Classicism, as well as individuality, momentary inspiration and the temporal over the timeless and universal (Pavel, 2014). Classicists were favouring the past and tradition and Romantics the modern times and innovation (Pavel, 2014). „Classicists“ believed that the only right way to progress in art, was to continue from the tradition, which was classical (Pavel, 2014).

Building on top of art as defined by the „Ancients“ was considered correct partly because of a wide spread belief in a „one of a kind“ artistic, cultural and political excellency of Classical Greece (Pavel, 2014; Gombrich, 2006). On the other hand the „Romantics“ felt limited by the number of established rules, control, and the almost unchanging beauty ideal prescribed (Pavel, 2014; Gombrich, 2006). They preferred to express the novelty of their time, their individuality and feelings, fully, freely and immediately, (Pavel, 2014; Gombrich, 2006).

### 2.2.2 Definition of a classic work of art

Today, a term classic work of art generally describes an exemplary work of art. Therefore even a Romantic work of art can be called a classic. Classic work of art is therefore mostly understood as the best example of a certain artist, style, era, ...

Similarly, in music, period named classical is that of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, often regarded as the exceptionally fertile period in the history of Western music (Rushton, 1994). In the same manner, we throughout history chose

to name the best periods in other fields of art, classic periods. Accordingly, the 17th century is titled the „classical age“ of French and Spanish literature and the 19th century that of the Western novel (Pavel, 2014). Furthermore, a Classic period represents a period in the Greek history when its culture has reached its peak, this is considered to be from 5th to 4th centuries BC (Gombrich, 2006).

Classic can also be used for describing Ancient Greek and Roman works of art in general or those of periods inspired by them, such as 15th-century Renaissance and 18th-century Neo-Classicism; or other works of art referring to Ancient Greek aesthetic principals, such as harmony and restraint (Gombrich, 2006).

However, a classic work of art today is mostly the work of art which most people consider to be best of its kind.

## 2.3 What is a Classic According to Beuve, Eliot, Kermode and Bloom?

### 2.3.1 Quality

A general definition of a classic work of art, as previously suggested is, a work considered to be best of its kind. Such work can be the best example of a certain artist, of a movement, an era, ... By being the best example, it should be a work of art that captures best what a certain artist, movement, or an era wished to express. Being such also denotes that this is a work of art of certain quality. Classics are sometimes even called masterpieces. Gellius already talked about classics as superior and exemplary (Kermode, 1983; Oxford Classical Texts, 1968).

According to Eliot (1945) a work of art becomes a classic, because it has reached a certain quality, he calls maturity. He argues that a true classic is a work of art of a mature medium in a mature time and culture (Eliot, 1945). In addition, Eliot (1945) says, it takes a mature artist that has acquired perfect mastery of the array of tools created and perfected through time, for his mature expression, enabling a truly classic work of art.

A classic work of art would according to Eliot (1945), among other, be a potential of one approach to making realised. Such way of making would, according to him, have to already be developed by artists over time, by the means of evolution, to reach a needed level of maturity to enable a classic (Eliot, 1945). In addition to the underlying circumstances that would enable maturity of a work of art, he emphasises artist's needed mastery of the tools enabling him his ultimate expression (Eliot, 1945). All that „technical“ mastery would serve him to express his originality fully and maturely, such originality which is in itself mature (Eliot, 1945).

The individual artistic expression that produces a classic, however neces-

sarily needs to be of a certain kind. According to Sainte-Beuve (1909-14), Eliot (1945), Kermode (1983) and Bloom (1994) it needs to be able to be comprehended by many.

„A true classic, as I should like to hear it defined, is an author who has enriched the human mind, increased its treasure, and caused it to advance a step; ...who has expressed his thought, observation, or invention, only provided it be broad and great ...“ (Sainte – Beuve, 1909-14, Para. 16).

Sainte – Beuve (1909-14) has with his definition of a classic artist, expressed a belief that a classic work of art carries an element of innovation, a personal point of view of an artist. However, that such originality should uncover something common to us all (Sainte-Beuve, 1909-14). This has been further acknowledged by Harold Bloom (1994), who suggests that these are the works of art of an aesthetic significance, which is consisting both of mastery of the tools and originality of an artist. However, such novelty as they present is a discovery of what each of us should be able to find in ourselves or in our view of the world after experiencing it (Bloom, 1994).

In their writings Eliot (1945), Sainte-Beuve (1909-14), Kermode (1983) and Bloom (1994) all agree, that it is in connection with the work of art's universality, an ability of a work of art to be relevant for many and to stay relevant through time that quality (maturity) denotes a classic work of art.

**In clothing, such quality would showcase the potential of a certain technique of creating clothing perfected through time. Moreover, this would be a clothing design that would answer to the need of many.**

## 2.3.2 Universal

The classic should according to Kermode (1983), Eliot (1945), Bloom (1994), and Sainte – Beuve (1909-14), be universal, meaning it should be understood by

many. Classic is such, they agree, because it carries the content that is common to us all (Kermode, 1983; Eliot, 1945; Bloom, 1994; Sainte-Beuve, 1909-14). In addition, Eliot (1945) suggests, a classic is a product of a way of making that is inclined to develop towards a collective style.

T.S. Eliot suggests a definition for determining universality of a work of art; „When a work ... has, beyond its comprehensiveness in relation to its own ..., an equal significance in relation to a number of foreign ..., we must say that it has also universality“ (Eliot, 1945, p. 27).

Such classic would be understood cross-culturally (Eliot, 1945). However, classics can be more or less universal and therefore more or less a classic (Eliot, 1945). They can exist in smaller as well as bigger cultural scope. A classic can be Slovenian, Finnish, Chinese, Russian or American, Western or Eastern. If local particularities prevent for a classic to be fully universal, they make for a classic that is truly of a certain kind of culture (Eliot, 1945).

Even then in a particular culture, a classic should as T.S.Eliot states; „...find its response among all classes and conditions of men“ (Eliot, 1945, p. 27).

**A classic wardrobe item would therefore be that which is widely worn.**

### 2.3.3 Timeless

Gellius in the 5th century BC already uses the word “antiquiore”, when describing a classic writer (Kermode, 1983; Oxford Classical Texts, 1968). Suggesting that such a writer should be of some age and likely be tested by time, before being named a “classic” and used as an example for others (Kermode, 1983).



Later, in his *Imitations of Horace*, Alexander Pope, similarly grants a status of a classic to the work of art that has remained relevant for a longer period of time; „Who lasts a century can have no flaw, I hold that Wit a Classic, good in law“ (Pope, 2006, p. 374).

According to Kermode (1983), Sainte-Beuve (1909-14), Eliot (1945) and Bloom (1994), classics should be universally understood not only in a one particular time, but throughout time. Such universality, we call timelessness, and is according to the previously mentioned scholars one of the characteristics of classic works of art (Kermode, 1983; Sainte-Beuve, 1909-14; Eliot, 1945; Bloom, 1994).

A truly classic work of art should therefore be made in the past, stay relevant through time and be relevant today (Kermode, 1983; Sainte-Beuve, 1909-14; Eliot, 1945; Bloom, 1994). In addition Kermode (1983) gives us a recipe for determining the timelessness of a classic. He advocates that such work of art has to survive some generations of critics before being considered timeless and a classic (Kermode, 1983). Therefore, if a work of art has lasted sufficient amount of significant changes and critics in a culture and is contemporaneous with our present, one could call it „timeless“ (Kermode, 1983; Bloom, 1994).

**In fashion timeless would be a clothing item created in the past, that endured many changes in style.**

### *2.3.3.1 Timelessness and its connection to „the establishment“*

However, that which is timeless might also be such for it was determined as of value for past, present and future by a person with authority. Such authority in enabling a work of art's timelessness are usually established artists, critics, curators, educational establishments and other (Kermode, 1983; Bloom, 1994). Educational establishments, for example, have an ability of deciding which of numerous past works of art are the most exemplary and therefore worthy of study. Together those authorities decide which works will be introduced to the

new generations, be re-printed, stay exhibited, and will in other ways have their life prolonged.

However, because the establishment in the West was/is only of one sort, a selection of what is of value, classic and therefore timeless could have been

based on a biased foundation. In fact, recent debates surrounding classic works of art, expose their common trait of being almost exclusively a product of „privileged white European men“ (Hicks, 2004). There might quite possibly be more works of art with classic properties, created by women, racial minorities, artists of different nationalities, cultures, religion... however the kind of authority that was determining their classic quality and enabling their timelessness, appears not to have been valuing artists and works of art from diverse backgrounds. Consequently, opportunities such as education for such artists were limited (Nochlin, 1971). Authorities may therefore be another agent in determining a work of art's timelessness, and their status of a classic. Consequently, classics could also be seen as expressing/illustrating authority and establishment.

## 2.3.4. Definition of a classic work of art according to Beuve, Eliot, Kermode and Bloom

**A classic is a work of art or design, that came before us, is still relevant for our contemporary times or can easily be made so by the process of adaptation on the side of an artist (Kermode, 1983; Eliot, 1945). Classics are of a certain quality, are timeless and universal (Kermode, 1983; Eliot, 1945; Sainte-Beuve, 1909-14; Bloom, 1994).**

## 2.4 Adaptations of Classic Works of Art

According to Kermode (1983), Bloom (1994) and Eliot (1945) classics have an ability, to be at the same time complete, and open to many different kinds of interpretations. This continually inspires artists to contribute to them, with various modes of adaptations (Kermode, 1983; Bloom, 1994). What is more Kermode (1983) and Bloom (1994) suggest that such adaptations also enable their survival, relevance and assert a work of art's status of a classic.

Such practice of re-appropriating classics, is done in similar ways in which Alexander Pope appropriated Horace (Kermode, 1983). Pope translated Horace from the Latin to the English language, which people of his time and place spoke (Kermode, 1983). Pope's contribution was firstly, that he recognized an ancient writer relevant for his time (Kermode, 1983). Secondly that he acknowledged a part of the past work of art in need of renovation for the entire classic text to be again fully relevant (Kermode, 1983). Finally, that he contributed to existing writings with his translation and his interpretation which enabled a survival of the text and created its variation (Kermode, 1983). In general, artists who choose to re-interpret a classic work of art recognize its value for the present time as well as the space inside this work of art enabling them their contribution / expression (Kermode, 1983).

A classic is, according to Kermode (1983) easily contemporaneous with our time or can become such with minimal means of modification on the side of an artist. This implies to an individual contribution of an artist being smaller than that which he is re-interpreting. It is naturally important for that which changes to remain that which has changed after it being changed. In addition, it is at stake, that a classic work of art would lose its effect if unrecognizable. This would mean that, that which is essential to such work of art must stay, and that which isn't, can change, if artists wish to make use of their classic characteristics, such as universality and timelessness.

Also, when presented with different interpretations of one classic we can clearly see the part which changed as well as that which did not. Against a re-

petitive, or a constant base a change is much more visible. However so is the base. The essence of a classic gives us knowledge about the past still relevant today, while the variable gives us information about the changing times or the artists themselves (Kermode, 1983). According to Kermode (1983) such adaptations carry forward an important knowledge about our history, about the time of the making of a classic and of different times in history in which it was adopted, as well as about artists contributing to them.

Overall, to decide to renovate a classic work of art, which is necessarily a past work of art, means to recognize the past as contemporary (Kermode, 1983). Artists adapting a classic work of art would therefore be concerned with relevance that is not isolated from the past but rather a renovation of the past (Kermode, 1983; Eliot, 1945). In addition, artists renovating classic works of art might be interested in addressing topics common to many or would wish to reach many with their work. Such artists might also be focused of progress isolated from the past, however they would be aware of the the gradual progress needed in order for people to adopt their vision of the future.

However, because the space for a creative input when creating such adaptations is smaller than when creating a completely original work of art, this practice could be considered as less expressive or unique.

**In fashion, a designer would take an existing garment with classic properties, acknowledging that it enables him his contribution and re-design it to express his artistic vision and his vision of the times. Such designer would be concerned with a creation that is based on re-invention rather than a completely new invention. He would also be interested in addressing many instead of few.**

# Chapter 3

## 3.1 Classic Wardrobe Items and Their Re-Designs

### 3.1.1 Introduction to classic wardrobe items and their re-designs

In this chapter, I offer the stories of selected classic wardrobe items as well as examples of some of their re-designs. I later give an overall definition of them as well as of practice of re-designing classics. A suit, denim trousers, and a jacket, a trench coat, a white shirt, a pencil skirt, and a little black dress are the items that I have selected and proved as classic wardrobe items. These items are furthermore the items that I have re-designed in my practical part of the thesis. Some additional thought has been given to the suit, because of my personal interest in it as well as for it seemed to be one of, if not the first classic wardrobe item.

A suit and other selected garments were explored through their physical description, their origin, history of use and their re-designs. Such research was done in order to learn about these items' characteristics, their meaning for us

as well as the meaning of their practice of re-designing. The examples of their re-designs presented, were those, in my opinion, most relevant for particular times or reflecting my interests and style in fashion design.

Helping me recognize these garment's classic characteristics, as well as designer's motivations behind their re-designs, was a definition of classics and their re-appropriations according to Beuve, Eliot, Kermode, and Bloom, from the previous chapter. By comparing the characteristics of classic works of art; quality, universality, and timelessness as well as of artistic adaptations of classic works of art, with that of selected garments, I was able to see if and how these characteristics display in such clothing. Correspondingly, my definitions of classic wardrobe items and their re-designs, at the end of this chapter, largely base on the previous chapter's findings.

Other sources important for this part were: Farid Chenoune's *A History of Men's Fashion* (1993), Christopher Breward's *The suit: Form, Function & Style* (2016), Anne Hollander's *Sex and the Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress* (2016), Daniel Miller and Sophie Woodward's *initiated Global Denim* (2011) and *Blue jeans: The art of the ordinary* (2012), Emma McClendon's *Denim: Fashion's Frontier* (2016), Valerie Steel's *The black dress* (2007) as well as various other primary and secondary sources dealing with the topic of classic wardrobe items and their re-designs. The examples of their re-designs, while chosen from my personal archive of them, were further researched through the literature based on their designers'.

However, giving me the best overall idea of the phenomenon of classic wardrobe items and their re-designs was MoMA exhibition, *Items: Is Fashion Modern?*, its catalogue by Paola Antonelli, Michelle Millar Fisher and Stephanie Kramer (2017) as well as their conferences MoMA LIVE, *Items: Is Fashion Modern?: Abecedarium*, (Antonelli, 2016a), *Items: Is Fashion Modern?, A Salon* (Antonelli, 2016b), and *Fashion is Kale: Celebrating Fashion's Hidden Heroes* (The Museum of Modern Art, 2017).

Also relevant for my understanding of motivations behind and the practice of re-designing of classics were exhibitions "MARGIELA / GALLIERA, 1989-2009" and "Margiela, Les années Hermès". Both illustrating re-designs of classics according to a style of designer Martin Margiela, as well as following his interpretation of a style of a Hermès fashion house.

## 3.2 A Suit

### **General definition:**

**A suit is a group of matching garments. Either two or three piece, it contains trousers, a jacket and sometimes a vest worn underneath it.**

### *Material:*

A suit is therefore created out of the matching, fine traditionally woollen woven material or its blend. Nowadays polyester and woollen blends, are produced for easy maintenance and affordable price. Still, most used are woollen yarns; worsteds and woollens, woven in different flannels, twills and other. The colors, most common in suits are; black, shades of grey, brown and navy. If not plain, pinstripes, checks, and Glen plaids are some of the most regularly used patterns on suiting.

### *Physical definition:*

A jacket of a suit is tailored and can be single or double breasted. The fabric of a jacket is lined with canvas (linen, cotton or horse hair) or a fusible. This canvas is then covered with a thin woven fabric, called underlining (usually silk or viscose). One of the jackets' trademark details is its lapel. Most commonly used is a notched as well as peaked or shawl lapel with its „Milanese buttonhole“. There are two flapped or jetted pockets positioned at the front hip line and one smaller one on the left side of the chest. The jacket often has one or two vents on its backside. Full-length, semi-fitted trousers are accompanying the jacket and are designed with no fold, one or two folds in the middle front and a cuff or no cuff at the bottom.

The suit can be made bespoke, made-to-measure or ready-to-wear. Bespoke is a suit created from the „customer's“ precise measurements as well as handmade by master craftsmen, tailor. Such is the oldest approach to its construction. Made-to-measure on the other hand, describes making by selecting

a pre-made suit of the closest size, fit, and model which is later on adjusted to fit the specific „customer“ by the tailor. Ready-to-wear suits are the ones who are completely standardized but come in different sizes and various styles and fits for specific figures. The stores selling standardized suits often offer small adjustments to fit the suit the customer; such as shortening the length of the trousers. The latter is the fastest and cheapest approach to its construction and production and is a quite modern phenomenon.

#### *Origin of a suit:*

A suit derives from a tailoring tradition established by Western men. Tailor-made clothing was created by them, centuries ago to cover a human body as precisely as possible. Such garments fitted a body, and that required a great understanding of the anatomy on the part of a tailor. Tailors' technique was evolving from the middle ages onwards and was practiced by men for the purpose of dressing themselves as well as women (Hollander, 2016). It supplied both genders with clothing that was for a long time colorful, exuberant, in different ways embellished and was generally quite similar (Chenoune, 1993; Hollander, 2016). However, by the 18th-century women started dressing themselves (Hollander, 2016). After that, clothing soon became separated to that of women made by „modists“ and that of men, still made by the tailors (Hollander, 2016). While women's fashion became more focused on temporary expressions, ornamentation, and re-invention, men's became more and more restrained and similar (Hollander, 2016; Chenoune, 1993).

Psychologist John Carl Flügel later explained such separation on the part of men, as „...a great masculine renunciation“ (Breward, 2016, para. 15).

This shift in men's fashion soon after gave birth to a suit as we know it today and other garments that we call classic. What affected such separation and the creation of classic garments such as a suit were, according to Hollander (2016), the new politics and men's aesthetic that became once more inspired by the Classical.

Values of society and consequently men have changed and they desired a



clothing that would reflect those “newly” acquired ideals. A new political model was democratic also corresponding to the one of Ancient Greece (Hollander, 2016). Their garments, therefore, had to be designed accordingly to the politics, with many in mind. A democratic atmosphere possibly also reflected in men’s desire to dress alike. Moreover, Breward (2016) suggests, virtues such as modesty became promoted by the religious advisors and the rise of Protestantism in Northern European countries at the time. In addition to a Classical, a certain kind of clerical ideal stepped into the aesthetics of the men’s dress (Breward, 2016). Colors corresponding to such models were adopted into a male attire, such as black, white, brown and shades of grey (Breward, 2016; Chenoune, 1993). These colors were considered respectable and modest.

According to Hollander (2016, Ch.3, Para. 1); „Modern suit really started in the later seventeenth century, when some sort of loose-fitting buttoned coat became the single most desirable garment for men.“

In the following decades, that coat became stripped of all of its unnecessary details and features (Hollander, 2016). Such reduction was done by the tailors on a mission to reach the Classical model of purity and of what is essential, (Hollander, 2016).

The end result, a suit as we know it today, was therefore what was the purest expression of the tailoring technique and consequently men’s dress as well as aesthetic of the time, which was in a way also that of the earlier time (Hollander, 2016). What is more, Hollander (2016) believes that tailors adopted the anatomical ideal of the ancient time, that of athletic nude, and interweaved it in their pattern base. Therefore, slowly a men’s coat started resembling the ideal figure of a classical male, (Hollander, 2016). Frocks started shortening and growing toward the shoulders, emphasizing them. With time the inner construction of the coat, such as paddings and linings, moved to the shoulders and a chest area emphasizing an ideal, trapezoid, body form that closely resembled that of Ancient Greek sculptures (Hollander, 2016). Even today a suit remains enhanced in those same spots, with shoulder paddings and by being lined with a stiff horse or linen chest lining later in the making process, pressed with a

specific mould to create such an ideal muscular chest shape.

A direct predecessor of today's men's suit was according to Hollander (2016), Breward (2016) and Chenoune (1993) a version of a suit called a "lounge suit". Such suit was created for a leisure and country wear (Chenoune, 1993). In today's time, it would be an equivalent of a matching trainer suit. Such clothing was naturally not acceptable for formal occasions but could be used while traveling and other leisure activities (Chenoune, 1993). What was considered appropriate for a gentleman at the times was a frock or a morning coat. However, until 1910, according to Breward (2016), the lounge suit was already synonymous with business and formal wear. The way a lounge suit became elevated into every day and a formal men's attire was, according to Hollander (2016), similar to the way denim trousers became elevated into a daily wear in the 1920s. Aristocratic youth adopted a lounge suit as a fashionable clothing and was able to elevate it to its later status (Hollander, 2016).

A fashion for such a suit as well as its classic style prospered in England in the late 18th century (Chenoune, 1993). At the time England was seen as a forward thinking both in their politics and technology and was overall a powerful country. Part of the reason that French, Americans and other adopted a British suit might be because they saw their values as modern and their dress as expressing such modernity. According to Breward (2016), a suit spread in a similar way to other nations. First in other Western countries and later in countries such as China and Japan, where a suit has been implemented during their process of "modernization" (Breward, 2016). Nowadays, as a result of, globalization, a suit is widely used in different countries around the world and has almost lost any connotation with its founding culture. However, a suit was first representing particular ideals of a particular culture that was perceived by its adopters as modern, progressive and authoritative. In most of the places where this culture was influential a suit was implemented in a response to the influential ideology.

However, the initial idea was for it to be modern, reflect modern times and values, which meant for it to be modest, essential and democratic. The latter indicated such a garment should work for people on all the levels of the social ladder. A reason for a suits' wider adoption was, I believe, not only in the authority and influence of its creator, or tendency of men to strive for a class equality and their consequent strive to appear the same but was in quite a large

way enabled by its puritan and neutral design. First, its restrained design inspired by the classical and clerical values stripped it from all the details that in the past would be used to separate one from another and would if created in a specific, way denote wealth, higher or lower class. Second, black which was a standard color for a suit fitted in any occasion for its multiple meanings that it had acquired through time, which enabled it to fit naturally in all the ways and places of living (Steele, 2007). Such color was furthermore intriguing both for a higher and lower class of men; the latter would appreciate it for its resistance to dirt while both would value it for its elegance and previous links with aristocratic wear (Steele, 2007).

I believe a suit was designed with many in mind, serving to seemingly unify people, as was the goal of the ideology of the time of its creation. However, it did so only from the general point of view, from the far and in the context of its own culture. At a closer look, one sees how a distinction on the part of the so called higher classes was still practiced and present in a suit. One of the first and most lasting class markers was if a suit fitted well. Only wealthy men could afford a well-tailored suit that took more effort, time and money to make. A well-fitted suit was marking gentleman of an aristocratic status (Chenoune, 1993). Since it was no longer appropriate for men to showcase their wealth and their status too boldly, such an act was against the culture of the time; The extent of the distinctive part was much smaller than before, however, it was just as powerful. One of the most known to illustrate the authority of the well-fitted suit was a British dandy, so-called “Beau Brummel” (Chenoune, 1993). Brummel was a middle-class man in a quest to reach a higher status, that of a gentleman (Chenoune, 1993). He has for a brief time achieved it solely by appearing as one, that was by investing in perfectly tailored suits.

However, generally looking a suit was a suit. Such clothing didn't anymore change or reflect a specific personality as it once did. Therefore, for a German architect Adolf Loos a suit was a perfect example of modernist design, for its timeless appeal, clean and modern look (Breward, 2016). Even though seemingly invariable as described by Loos, a suit was changing throughout time. In about a hundred years from its creation the biggest attempt to modernize a suit happened. However, the suit was not changing on the outside. What was modernizing was the way it was made.

At first, a suit's creation was a slow and expensive process, a domain of master craftsmen, tailors, done by hand and separately for each customer. But, with an invention of a tape measure and a perfected standardization of clothing patterns by the start of the 19th-century tailors modernized their craft and made it more accessible to wider male audiences (Chenoune, 1993; Breward, 2016). In addition, novel, more „industrial“ approach to the production of tailored garments was created which shifted the emphasis from bespoke made to ready-to-wear suits. Suits were because of the ability of tailoring to modernize, standardize and consequently industrialize, made cheaper and faster. A tailor's ability to adapt to the changing times and technology resulted with an even more democratic version of a suit, the kind that was more accessible.

Always staying based on the same centuries-old principals, tailoring was adapting in a form of an evolution. For example, when a sewing machine was adopted it mimicked a handmade seam that was used before (Breward, 2016). Also because of that, a suit did not seem to be changing. A look of a suit essentially remained the same. However, Chenoune (1993) and Hollander (2016) both clearly note that a change was very much present in a suit. The fact that many perceive it as largely staying the same while changing also denotes that it changes minimally. We could suggest that it has a certain essence which stays the same and a disposition that changes. Such a disposition could for its amount of presence be called, a detail. A suit, therefore, changes, only in detail. One of the reasons for adjusting a suit would be a desire of a man to make a suit his own another would be for it to reflect changing times and ideals better.

While we might like its uniform look and consequent effect which makes us feel connected to one another, because of our desire to belong, we also wish for a clothing to express what makes us different, and a suit enables us a space for such personification. Our strong desire to belong as well as to stand out and its ability to simultaneously enable us both might be one of the reasons for its wide appeal (Miller & Woodward, 2011). A suit similarly inspired personification around the globe. In India, a suit was first introduced by British colonialists (Breward, 2016). While accepting Western style and appreciating the seemingly unifying feel and look of it, people of Indian origin wished for a suit to also reflect their culture. What emerged was a Nehru suit (Breward, 2016).

A suit was also consistently changing styles, altering in shape, a width of the

lapel, trouser style, presence or absence of certain details, a pattern of a cloth, fit,...creating an opposition with a previously relevant trend and therefore creating a distinction between men. Such practice would serve to distinguish between those who are more and those who are less aware of the fashion and the times which were many times those who could afford to own multiple suits. Later with and throughout 20th century a suit became re-designed and styled in various ways. A suit was now made cheaper, with the help of the industrialization and a consequent automatization of its construction enabling people to own one of each kind. A temporal expression, which fashion is, was therefore much more lightly approached in suits and by many. However, the image of the way a suit should look like was still very much authoritative.

In her paper, *The Zoot Suit: Its History and Influence*, Alford (2004) writes about an oversized „zoot suit“, adopted by the African-American as well as Hispanic men in the 30's and 40's America, that was a minorities' medium for self-expression as well as their cultural identification (Alford, 2004). A version of a suit was colorful, of a particular “baggy” shape, wide-shouldered, accessorized, mostly with a chain, all of which separated it from its established version (Alford, 2004).

American racial minorities created such style of a suit to express their connection to one another (Alford, 2004). However, a zoot suit represented quite a large deviation from what was a standard model of a suit to the point that it could be seen wearing an anti-establishment message.

Soon after, in the early 1950's Britain, a well-tailored style of a suit was worn by the Teddy Boys subculture inspired by the Edwardian style, deriving their appreciation from the style of a renowned Saville Row (Chenoune, 1993; Breward, 2016). The Teddy boys were the offspring of British working men; what they wore was a clothing that once represented aristocratic status; such style, therefore, expressed a certain kind of message for being adopted in a certain kind of context.

If a suit was not changing in detail, it was changing context and was like that practicing change as well as retaining, its relevance (Hollander, 2016). One of its major contextual leaps was to a wardrobe of another gender. An occurrence of, traditionally men's attire slowly entering into a women's wardrobe, paired with a women's growing desire for equality. With their aim to achieve equal rights as

men, women adopted a suit, a symbol of men. Such an act was first done by bold women on top of their times, known as influencers. One of them was a fashion designer Coco Chanel unsatisfied with the restrictive female clothing of the time as well as women's restrictive lifestyle.

Other admired female figures embraced a suit with a similar attitude. Consequently, a suit on women became to denote androgyny or a kind of sexual provocation. According to Manferdini (2011a) in 1930, influential Hollywood star Marlene Dietrich starred in a white „Tuxedo“ pantsuit and a top hat in a movie „The Blue Angel“, a year later female pilot Emilia Earhart was captured wearing one. In 1933 Greta Garbo appeared in a male suit in „Queen Christina“ (Manferdini, 2011a). On and off screen, movie stars such as Katherine Hepburn started appearing in suits and helped popularize it and to normalize its place in a women's wardrobe (Manferdini, 2011a).

Influencers such as movie stars, youth subcultures, as well as fashion designers have continuously been re-assuring its value. What is more, they infused it with additional relevance and like that passed it forward from one generation to another. Although still carrying a connotation of a men's attire, a suit has through its years of adoption and adaptation from the women's side, and their garment's creators acquired an almost genderless feel.

#### *Fashion designers re-designing a suit:*

In the 1960s, when Yves Saint Laurent introduced an extremely feminine version of, a black „tuxedo“ worn by a Penelope Tree and photographed by Richard Avedon, a suit finally achieved a feminine look and lost some of its previous masculine and androgynous connotation (Sozzani, 2011c). In 1975, a famous photo was taken at Rue Aubriot by Helmut Newton, portraying a model smoking a cigarette in a Yves Saint Laurent's version of the suit, called „Le Smoking“, (Sozzani, 2011c). Soon after, trouser suits were available and acceptable for a majority of women. What is more, they appeared elegant (Sozzani, 2011c).

In the 1980's when wearing the suit collided with the power dressing style reflecting women's growing emancipation, a pant suit was one of the most popular outfits for women.

Catering „power suits“ with a strongly enhanced masculine silhouette in high fashion were designers Montana and Mugler. As it is a custom in fash-

ion, an opposition to such look was soon created representing a novel more fashionable style of a suit. Montana's once very attractive structural and „unnaturally“ shaped suits for women provoked a response from Italian designer Giorgio Armani. Armani, he completely removed the shoulder paddings, freed the jackets of most of their construction, weight and unnecessary details (Celant, Koda, & Solomon, 2000).

At the same time, Jil Sander also started her business designing for the new generation of businesswomen. Offering a well cut and clean cut suits' made out of high-quality fabrics. Jil Sander was not only drawn to such garment for its links with business wear but also for its aesthetic purity. In addition to modern look, her clothing gave women a space to show their own personality.

Another fashion movement contributed to the suit's recognition in that era. Rei Kawakubo and Yohji Yamamoto, Japanese designers, re-enforced a suit's genderless image by treating it as a unisex clothing item. In Spring 1995 Comme des Garçons' fashion show, Rei Kawakubo introduced numerous oversized, deconstructed and reconstructed versions of an off-white woollen suit for women, with pattern directly borrowed from a male wardrobe and a show titled „Transcending gender“.

Later on, Martin Margiela, deconstructed and provided variations of silhouettes and designs. He also challenged the idea of a fit, with his collections of classic garments blown out of proportions, such as Spring- Summer and Fall-Winter 2000 and 2001. As a contrast to his own collections, he created a neatly tailored sleeveless woollen suit for the house of Hermès in the Autumn of 2003. Margiela worked with classics, for his fascination with their everyday appeal, tradition and intricate construction.

Another fashion designer, Alexander McQueen, trained at tailor at Saville Row, where he worked on adapting men's suits to a female customer, offered many variations of it in his designs. Heidi Slimane shortened the suit's jackets and trousers and designed them slim fitted for Dior Homme in the years from 2000 to 2007.

## *Conclusions:*

Nowadays, „the suit is for a fashion designer what a chair is to the industrial designer...” (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017, p. 238).

A suit is now central both to men's and women's fashion. Its variations are offered consistently according to different trends and styles of designers. Paradoxically, a suit seems to remain the same as it was a century ago.

A value that people recognize in a suit, today, is a value of past for a modern time as well as a suit's unifying effect. For its widespread use in the past and in their present a suit gives its wearers a strong sense of belonging both to the past and to the present. However, inside that unifying effect a suit enables its wearers to express. Because its base is constant through time and therefore well known, any deviation from it is clearly visible. Such a constant and timeless base enables us to trace changes in fashion through time. These changes tell us a lot about society itself, since fashion is often intrinsically linked with them. A suit as well as other classics therefore give us a good lens into changes in our society as well as into that which does not change. A personalized version of a suit also very clearly shows us a personality of its creator, even though present only in details. We can similarly quite easily see and compare styles of different designers re-designing such a classic item, and easily recognize their personal input.

Throughout time a suit kept changing in its details in order to retain its connection to the changing culture. Agents enabling it to adapt to such changes were influencers aware of the era as well as of the suit's value and its ability to change. These agents weren't necessarily fashion designers or tailors, many times they were influential personalities infusing a classic suit with their own personality, style and their relevance. Centuries after its creation a suit essentially remains the same but stays open for modernization and re-interpretation. It has by now spread to different cultures around the globe. Today a suit is worn almost everywhere and seemingly unites people of different culture, religion, race, gender, ...



## 3.3 Denim Trousers and a Jacket

### **General definition:**

**Denim trousers and a jacket are garments created out of an extremely durable cotton right-hand, twill woven material called Denim.**

### *Material:*

A warp thread of a woven lays under two or more weft threads. Its two warp yarns are traditionally dyed in indigo blue while a weft thread is left undyed (McClendon, 2016). A white filling yarn is visible on the back-side of the material (McClendon, 2016). Traditionally, denim jackets and pants were created out of a stiff, unwashed and untreated material, called „Raw“ Denim-.

### *Physical definition:*

Also known as jeans, denim trousers as we know them today are recognized by details such as a belt with loops, a brand's logo on its right back side, two back pockets usually with brand's signature stitching, above it a yoke, a small watch pocket inside of the right front pocket, a button or a zip fly.

On the other hand, a denim jacket has a point turn-down collar, front placket equipped with copper buttons, long sleeves and button closure at the cuffs. A yoke in the front and back of a garment and a button – flap pockets at the chest and welt side pockets on the waist level. Two signature triangular darts are positioned at the front, and two darts are at the back. At the side of a waist are hem adjusters.

The seams of a denim jacket, as well as those of trousers, are enhanced with copper rivets at points most prone to getting torn. They have a double chain stitched inseams that are sewn with a thick heavy duty yarn usually in golden-rod or ochre color. In case denim fabric is woven on a shuttle loom the sides of the material are finished with a „selvedge“. Those are some of the essential

features of the modern Levi's 501's and that of a classic denim "trucker" jacket.

*Origin of denim trousers and a jacket and a history of their use:*

Denim, an extremely durable material was invented in the late 18th century and was already in use as a work wear fabric at the beginning of the 19th century (McClendon, 2016). But the start of the modern denim trousers dates back to May 20th, 1873 when an entrepreneur Levi Strauss and tailor Jacob Davis introduced their first version of riveted denim work wear trousers through their brand named Levi Strauss & Co. (McClendon, 2016). Their pants were catering to American miners and farmers in need of durable clothing. To a before existing version of denim trousers they added copper rivets on their weakest points and like that enhanced their durability (McClendon, 2016). First No. 501 denim trousers had one back pocket, an additional chinch at the waist, as well as suspender buttons and a rivet at the closing (Antonelli, 2016b). Most of these details disappeared after the World War II, either because of the war rationing or because of the items' modernization (SocAntiquaries, 2016). Their trousers were not the first denim trousers on the market; however, they were the first with added copper rivets (McClendon, 2016). 501 pants soon after their invention, became widely popular among working men for their enhanced durability and functionality. Although vastly appreciated among working men, for their practicality, denim trousers weren't seen as a desirable clothing item, up until the end of 1910's. It was with their appearance in 1920's and 1930's Hollywood cowboy movies, that denim trousers became, for the first time, elevated into the status of a fashionable clothing item (Hollander, 2016; McClendon, 2016).

Women adopted jeans after men, however because jeans were initially men's, they for some time held a masculine undertone. Denim trousers when worn by women, therefore, expressed a kind of sexual provocation. This seductive tension created when such manly clothing item was adopted by women, was largely where the appeal of the jeans laid for women. Such undertone has however, with time and a new shape, that was complementing and emphasizing women's figure, started reducing. In 1930's Levi's introduced the first version of jeans adjusted for women, called „Lady Levi's“ (Manferdini, 2011b). Denim trousers for a female wardrobe were differing from their male version in having a higher waist and an added chinch in the back, useful for adjusting the width of

the waist (Manferdini, 2011b). Garment was like that re-designed according to a female body-shape which helped to reduce the garment's association with men. Soon female celebrities, such as famed movie stars, started instilling jeans with their femininity, which made them to eventually become as feminine as they were masculine. According to Manferdini (2011b), in the 50's Grace Kelly wore jeans in „Rear Window“ while Elizabeth Taylor wore them in „The Last Time I Saw Paris“. Brigitte Bardot and Marilyn Monroe wore denim trousers on and off the screen, Manferdini (2011b). Later on, Audrey Hepburn, Jane Birkin, Anouk Aimée, Jane Fonda prolonged their popularity in women's wardrobe (Manferdini, 2011b).

In the meantime, the first version of a denim jacket was created. According to LS&CO (2017), the initial jacket was called a „triple pleat jacket“. It carried a companies' signature copper rivets as well as three pleats at the buttoning in the front, after which it got its name. A type I jacket followed in the early 1900's keeping only two of its front pleats and one chest pocket (Levi Strauss & Co., 2017). In the mid-1900's a flannel lining was added for additional comfort and warmth, until 1953 when Type II jacket with two chest pockets emerged (Levi Strauss & Co., 2017). After it, a denim jacket No. 7505 also called Type III or a „Trucker jacket“ got introduced and became an iconic garment in the years to follow. Its designer Jack Lucier eliminated the pleats and rivets of the previous jackets and added V folds to create a specific trapezoid shaped fit of a garment (Levi Strauss & Co., 2017). In the years to follow a denim jacket grew in popularity to a large degree because of its flattering fit.

Two other versions of jackets have later been introduced by Levi's, in the 1960s but none of them have reached the level of popularity of that of Type III (Levi Strauss & Co., 2017). The iconic shape of the popular Type III jacket was resembling that of a suit jacket. Such shape was narrow at the waist and wide at the shoulders. The rigid denim material enabled an almost sculptural trapezoid outline of a jacket. The reference such form held in both denim jacket as well as a suit jacket, was to a wide shouldered male, or according to Hollander (2016), the “ideal” classical male. In the same manner as the suit and denim pants, denim trucker jacket was first adopted by men and later by women for its intriguing and paradoxically seductive masculine look. Such manly look was so attractive to women also since it symbolized their desire to acquire rights equal to that of

men. However, soon, as it was the case with women wearing the suit and denim trousers, women wearing a trucker jacket became seen as normal. Three years after the introduction of the male, a female version of a denim trucker jacket got created by Levis&Co. (Levi Strauss & Co., 2017). A female model of a jacket further normalized the look of the garment on women and encouraged its entrance into an everyday women's wardrobe.

Jeans and a jean jacket were by the 50's worn both by men and women, and the two clothing items were seen as quite neutral. Although for some jeans still signalled, that which is American, for its origin and mass popularity there (Miller & Woodward, 2012). However, this connotation too faded, especially in the face of a new one emerging in the mid 1950's. In 1953 a movie „The Wild One“ starring Marlon Brando got released. In 1955 „Rebel Without a Cause“ followed with James Dean in a lead role (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017; McClendon, 2016). Both of the lead actors were wearing jeans while acting as rebellious young men. The popularity of these two movies and consequently their main character's infused denim trousers' with new attractiveness while it also instilled in them an image of rebellion. This kind of image, that of rebellion stuck with denim jacket and trousers, for quite some time. It furthermore prepared them to become part of different subcultures in the following decades.

After being infused with Marlon Brando and James Dean's disobedient movie characters, subcultures, such as the outlaw biker culture adopted the two garments. Bikers took them for their own and personalized their denim jackets, named „Kutte“; sometimes worn with cut out sleeves and the embroidery in patches on the backs, to express member's loyalty to the particular club. Heavy metal subculture later adopted the cut-off denim jacket as interpreted by the outlaw motorcycle clubs. In addition to these two, other subcultures got highly influenced by Brando's and Dean's on-screen appearances, such as the Greasers and the Leatherman's (Foley & Luecke, 2017). For some time, jeans retained a particular rebellious image coming from Brando and Dean, however this image eventually faded (Miller & Woodward, 2012). Afterwards jeans remained being worn by subcultures, but also by the mainstream public. Their presence in various subcultures as well as everywhere else, was now due to new array of influencers infusing them with their timely persona and style (Antonelli, 2016b). Jeans were interestingly part of almost all and often conflicting, subcultures of

the 20th century.

Throughout last century, jeans have proven their universality, as well as ability to adapt to and adopt, a style. In 1960's Mod's style was skinny shrink-to-fit jeans (Foley & Luecke, 2017). Further along the 20th century, hippies wore a worn out denim embellished with customized embroidery (McClendon, 2016). Rockers, such as Ramones were wearing them together with their cropped T-shirts, Chuck Taylor's, and Schott's Leather jacket. Sid Vicious and other Punks were wearing them skinny and distressed with studded jackets. Kurt Cobain popularized them for Grunge, washed and worn out. In the 90's Hip-Hop culture, baggy jeans were widely popular. Later on, skaters, inspired by the hip-hop culture, started wearing oversized Levi's.

*Fashion designers re-designing denim trousers and a jacket:*

Similarly, jeans adopted different styles of different designers. In the 80's a phenomenon of „designer denim“ emerged. Calvin Klein was one of the first to offer his take on the widely popular jeans, which had an essential look and adhered to the rules of purity as the rest of his designs. Klein, impressed by the neutral look of jeans, offered them almost unchanged with different washes and small changes in details and shape. However, he made up for his restraint in design with boldness in advertising.

Advertising was also a way in which most other denim brands differentiated themselves from one another, and built an image around their many times unchanging product, jeans (SocAntiquaries, 2016). Since denim trousers remained in most cases desired as they were, the advertisement was almost the only space for brands to express a particular image, that people would wish to attain with them (SocAntiquaries, 2016). Inside that space, an important tool for expressing a particular style were models wearing the garment.

For them being so common, jeans put a lot of emphasis on a person wearing them and took on them the image of their wearer. In the case of Calvin Klein, advertisements as well exuded his puritan aesthetics, which he portrayed with nudity and absence of everything that is not obligatory. The other important element of his style was, youthfulness. To all that he added an element of sexual provocation. In the early 1980's advertisements for his line, Calvin Klein Jeans featured young Brooke Shields filmed by Richard Avedon.

*In one of the adverts, Brooke Shields is filmed famously saying,  
„You want to know what comes between me and my Calvin’s? Nothing.“  
(Bairns & Tots, 2007).*

A provocative commercial caused outrage and popularized Calvin Klein Jeans. Ever since Calvin Klein sustained the kind of advertisements for his line of denim, together with their puritan look. In 1992, he as iconically featured young Kate Moss and Marky Mark in the CK Jeans commercial shot by Bruce Weber.

Another designer re-interpreting the jeans as well as a jean jacket was Austrian-born Helmut Lang. In the early 90's he was the first designer to put original Levi's 501 on a runway styling them with his designs (Seabrook, 2000). Lang, also one of the minimalists', often featured stiff, indigo dyed „raw“, „selvedge“ denim. Denim, as it once was and as it is the most basic. However, he was also the one designer who gave a true popularity to re-designed denim. He created numerous interpretations of denim trousers and a jacket, with unique details. An example was rubber inked denim pants from his Fall – Winter 1999 – 2000 runway collection as well as a denim jacket with printed stripes at the back from 1996. Lang as well introduced colored denim in Spring 1996 and denim with a burnt look in 1998. What is inspiring in Lang's designs was his ability to retain most of the identity of denim trouser and a jacket, while re-designing it. It might be that his designs are still worn today and are extremely desirable among collectors, for that particular reason.

In the same era Belgian designer Martin Margiela deconstructed and re-constructed second hand and vintage denim trousers. In his Spring-Summer 1991 collection, he merged a jacket and pants in the waist and created a long denim coat. In Fall 1996 he transformed denim trousers into a skirt, in Spring 1999, he collaged them and turned them into dresses, while in Fall 2000, he created them oversized and fitted asymmetrically on a model. Martin Margiela was a designer that was inspired by everydayness of denim and their wide appeal among people.

Today, Vetements collective under the lead of designer Demna Gvasalia continues with similar design philosophy, taking the items that we wear every day and putting them in a new context. In the Fall 2014 collection, they creat-

ed the now already iconic version of denim trousers made out of two pairs of vintage Levi's. The second-hand jeans were sourced from the vintage stores, disassembled and merged according to a design. The high waisted re-worked Vetements jeans became one of the most desirable fashion items in the year after its introduction. Later on, the collective collaborated with Levi's and continued appropriating denim regularly in their collections.

Another fashion designer inspired by everyday wardrobe items, their appeal and their beauty, Lutz Huelle, created numerous variations of denim jackets and denim coats, either re-worked, printed or collaged and merged with a cloth.

#### *Conclusions:*

From denim trousers' history of use, what we see clearly is how a garment took on a new life with the help of influencers and how it consequently got infused with their image. I suggest, that denim trousers stayed relevant unchanged, because of their ability to adopt relevance through different relevant contexts in which they were adopted through time. A certain kind of image which caused their desirability and prolonged their use, clearly also reflected in connotations attained and exuded by the garment. One of the first were the American, masculine and rebellious feel that the garment expressed.

I also believe, that jeans have been able to bridge the changes in time, with the help of designers adopting them to times with their timely style. Such designer variations of denim trousers however needed to keep the essential qualities of a garment in order for a base of this garment to transcend the time.

#### *Additional literature research:*

According to Miller & Woodward (2012), jeans were able to successfully take on as well as lose all of its many styles and connotations and are since 1950's becoming more and more "meaningless". Such meaninglessness encourages their neutrality, which qualifies them to be worn universally. Indeed, because of that, denim trousers have, by now, appealed to people from all around the world of different gender, age, race and nationality (Miller & Woodward, 2011). This marks not only their universality but a consequent democratic appearance. This is a garment that now seemingly unites people from different parts of the world. Although only a pair of trousers, jeans are with their universal presence

reminding us of our similarities, everyday.

Also, by being used so extensively denim trousers give us an extraordinary feeling of belonging, that is to a global world, or in other words to everyone else wearing them. This feeling of belonging is extended from the present time to the past due to their long-lasting presence in our society. By them being a constant throughout time and throughout our own lives, jeans furthermore give us a sense of stability. An ability of garment to do that, make it desired in an era with an unstable political atmosphere, such as ours.

In addition, their extensive use, enables us to blend in with the environment. What this also does is it makes people comfortable.

*Since what makes people most uncomfortable is according to Miller & Woodward „the imagined critical gaze of others“ (Miller & Woodward, 2012, p. 49).*

By being so neutral and ubiquitous, jeans provide a safe choice when choosing what to wear enabling us to avoid personal criticism by others, possible if we were to showcase our identity with the way we dress. Jeans, at least in its most basic form, doesn't anymore say anything at all about us (Miller & Woodward, 2012). Such regular jeans, universal and timeless, that enable us to hide in the crowd, might seem like an impersonal garment. Though, Miller & Woodward (2012) argue that while universal, jeans also enable us to express our own individuality. Like that, they simultaneously answer to our conflicting desire to fit in and to stand out, (Miller & Woodward, 2011; 2012)

Back in the 70's, hippies wore their jeans and jean jackets out almost wholly, popularizing their distressed look for the first time in history. According to McClendon (2016) by wearing the denim out, they have also revealed its ability to mold after the wearer's body and to reflect its unique characteristics and movements. The so-called „whiskers“ which appear on „raw“ denim are unique for each wearer. They occur in the places that are most used, exposing the level of our knee and elbow, a place where we wear our wallet or an I-phone as well as showing our sitting marks. All this intimacy that personalized worn out effects offer is possible because of the unique process of dyeing a „raw“ denim fabric, called „rope dyeing“ (McClendon, 2016; SocAntiquaries, 2016). With the



exposure and use, „raw“ denim is uncovering its white core, left undyed in the specific process of dyeing, (McClendon, 2016; SocAntiquaries, 2016).

At the same time universal and personal, timeless while existing in many variations throughout time, denim trousers are a garment with intriguing and also paradoxal characteristics. They are able to exist in and out of fashion system at the same time. Their timeless appeal releases us from the burden of following fashion (Miller & Woodward, 2012). However, all that only insofar as jeans remain in their basic form (Miller & Woodward, 2012). Any of the jeans, re-designed according, for example, the times become „marked“ by them and are while gaining on their attractiveness for a specific time loosing in their timeless and universal appeal.

## 3.4 A Trench Coat

### *Physical definition:*

A loose fit or fitted, made out of a water-repellent fabric, such as gabardine, rubberized or made out of standard twill-woven cotton, wool or a synthetic blend. A trench-coat is usually made in a khaki, beige, grey, navy or black color. The coat most of the times has a raglan sleeve, a double-breasted ten button fastening, a waist belt with leather buckle, a buttoned pleat in the middle back and it is levelled at around a calf area. It is furthermore recognized by its details such as; a wide lapel, under-collar, hook-and-eye collar closure, a gun flap at the front right side and a storm flap in the back, button-through pockets, shoulder straps, and metal D rings on a waist belt.

### *Origin of a trench coat and history of its use:*

An indication of a „trench-coat“ can be found in the invention of a first waterproof material made by Charles Macintosh in 1823 and subsequently, the first waterproof coat ever made (Chenoune, 1993). A „Mac“ coat created out of rubberized cotton material became widely used and appreciated for its water resistance, for „everyday“ use and as military wear in Britain. Though entirely waterproof a „Mac“ was somewhat uncomfortable for its fabrics' non-breathability which caused its wearers to sweat heavily (Chenoune, 1993). However, later years saw the development of the water-resistant fabrics. According to Aquascutum (2018) in 1853, first to introduce such new fabric was a British tailor John Emary. A water-proof fabric was named „Wyncol“ and was a poplin fabric made out of a blend of cotton and nylon yarns (Aquascutum, 2018). Emary subsequently designed a rain-coat named „Aquascutum“, translating from Latin as a „water shield“ (Aquascutum, 2018). Aquascutum became popular and widely recognized among people thus Emary's clothing brand was later re-named after it (Aquascutum, 2018). However, it was „Gabardine“, invented by Thomas Burberry in 1879, that was at the same time breathable and rain-proof, durable and lightweight, that became a rain-proof material synonymous with a trench-coat (Burberry, n.d.). Burberry invented a technique of waxing

the yarns with lanolin, weaving them in a dense woven and later waterproofing them again (Burberry, n.d.). Although extremely durable Gabardine enabled ventilation through its woven's microscopic openings (Burberry, n.d.).

Both Burberry and Aquascutum were from their beginnings esteemed for their innovative and rain-proof materials, which manifested in their functional outerwear. Their garment's immense functionality was demonstrated by numerous explorers choosing their clothing for their challenging expeditions. Burberry equipped Ernest Shackleton, Robert Falcon Scott, and Roald Amundsen, with protective and functional clothing for their mission to the South Pole in the 1910s (Tynan, 2011). Furthermore, Edmund Hillary and his team of explorers wore Aquascutum while attempting their first climb on a Mount Everest in 1953 (Aquascutum, 2018).

According to Tynan (2011), in the early 19th century Britain, innovative and functional tailoring, such as waterproof garments were in high demand, firstly for the purposes of upper-class leisure wear and later on as a military uniform. As the latter, Tynan (2011) explains, rain-coats found their way to the battlefield as early as in the Crimean War but it wasn't until the First World War that they became widely used as such. Before the World War I, the British government issued regulations on the appearances of clothing suitable for soldiers and that ideal for officers, which to some extent defined a look of a „trench-coat“ that we know today, (Tynan, 2011).

While soldiers were given loose tunics, officers, traditionally coming from an upper class were prescribed a uniform, that would be „...cut as a lounge coat to the waist, very loose at the chest and shoulders, but fitted at the waist...“ (Dress regulation for the army, 1911, p. 9)

Trench-coats, as we identify them today, derive from such officer's coats, inspired by a traditional lounge coat (Tynan, 2011). Loungewear-inspired coats came in khaki, due to its camouflage ability making it fit for the battlefield (Tynan, 2011). For being worn by officers of a traditional upper-class origin, tailored coats became seen as a desirable clothing item among other soldiers (Tynan, 2011). However, these were the coats, that were meticulously made and

were out of reach for soldier (Tynan, 2011). Later on, during the first World War, due to the high rate of casualties among those army officers, the British government began to recruit on their position more men from a middle-class background, (Tynan, 2011). Tynan (2011) also mentions, how tailoring companies then started offering their officer's coats to the wider public, and how trench-coats accordingly became more affordable. After that, more soldiers, as well as civilians, adopted a trench-coat. People saw it as a symbol of British patriotism and a sign of compassion to those serving at the front (Tynan, 2011).

Burberry's was one of the highest ranked tailoring companies providing military wear and such gentleman coats at the time and was highly recommended by the aristocracy (Tynan, 2011). Besides, they held likes of prominent war veterans such as Marshal Lord Kitchener (Chenoune, 1993). However, Aquascutum also held a prominence having dressed King Edward VII himself in one of their raincoats (Aquascutum, 2018).

In 1916 Burberry's described their version of a coat as „Trench-Warm“ in their advertisement; referring to the harsh and muddy conditions of the trenches that British military was fighting in and that their coats helped to endure, (Tynan, 2011). People adopted a name and are still now associating trench-coat with a Burberry fashion brand (Tynan, 2011). Until today debates regarding the origin and ownership of a trench-coat persist and it is claimed by both Burberry and Aquascutum.

Trench-coat has been designed according to the military wear regulations but was given added function with the innovative breathable waterproof material and meticulously thought through and multi-functional details. A storm flap around the shoulders was designed to direct the rain away from the body, a high collar buttoned tight around the neck with the hook and eye, an under-collar and the wrist belts helped to prevent water entering the inside of the coat (Tynan, 2011). Furthermore, a flap in the front right served as protection from rain entering the front closure and from rifle recoil (Chenoune, 1993; Tynan, 2011). Button-through shoulder straps were carrying a mark of military rank and were as well used for carrying a backpack disabling it to slip off the shoulders, or for carrying other war accessories (Chenoune, 1993; Tynan, 2011). Metal D rings on the waist belt served for holding miscellaneous military equipment; such as gas masks, pistols, pouches, ... Large pockets were big enough to

store water sensitive equipment, with a button-through flap directing water away from it (Chenoune, 1993; Tynan, 2011). A knee length of the coat prevented it dragging in the mud while the loosely tailored shape and a buttoned pleat at the back enabled its wearers to move freely, especially in the instances of running or riding a horse (Tynan, 2011).

After a Second World War, many trench-coats were given away by a British government as part of a „Demob“ suit package to the former servicemen (Chenoune, 1993). Some of the men also kept their raincoat after the war since their garment was still in a wearable condition, because of its durability. Most others purchased it because they liked it for its functionality and it's looks.

Later in the 1940s, a trench-coat appeared in some of the most iconic movies of the time such as; „The Maltese Falcon“ (1941), „Casablanca“ (1942) and „The Big Sleep“ (1946) all starring Humphrey Bogart (Manferdini, 2011c). The tremendous popularity of those movies caused a trench-coat, a signature item of Humphrey Bogart's on and off the screen appearance, to elevate both to a status of a fashion icon and to infuse a coat with Bogart's movie characters, (Manferdini, 2011c). Later on, as mentioned by Manferdini, (2011c) Peter Sellers wore an Aquascutum trench-coat as inspector Clouseau in 1974 movie „The Pink Panther Returns“. Michael Caine was shown in it during his 1965 role of the investigator in a film „The Ipcress File“ (Manferdini, 2011c). Even before Bogart, Joan Fontaine was filmed wearing a white trench-coat in 1940's Alfred Hitchcock's thriller „Rebecca“ (Manferdini, 2011c). Ava Gardner was also wearing a beige version of it in a crime drama „The Killers“ (1946) and in 1948 Marlene Dietrich wore a belted khaki trench over a sheer nightgown in „A Foreign Affair“ while in 1957 she wore a dark belted version of it in a detective movie „Witness for the Prosecution“ (Manferdini, 2011c). Because of the way a trench was presented in such movies, it became associated with spies, detectives, hit men and women. This image is what caused a trench-coat to become infused with an undertone of mystery, danger, and crime.

According to Manferdini, (2011c) one of the first occasions in which a trench-coat appeared on a woman was already in 1928 being worn by Greta Garbo in „A Woman of Affairs“. Then as well as up until the 1960s a trench-coat held a strong masculine connotation, for it initially being a men's clothing item. Later on, with the help of feminine movie stars such as; Marilyn Monroe star-

ring in „Let's Make Love“ (1960) and Audrey Hepburn in „Breakfast at Tiffany's“ (1961) trench-coat acquired a feel of a feminine garment, (Manferdini, 2011c). In addition to Monroe and Hepburn, Brigitte Bardot was dressed in it in 1959's „Babette Goes to War“ directed by Christian Jaque and in „Love on a Pillow“ directed by Roger Vadim from 1962 (Manferdini, 2011c). Later on, Catherine Deneuve wore one of the most iconic designer versions of it, a YSL black patent leather trench-coat for her role of Belle de Jour, a 1967's film by Luis Bunuel. Worn alone with the addition of stilettos trench-coat because of that role in that movie became to represent a clothing item of a seductress.

Trench coat adopted different connotations through its long history of use. Especially through its particular use in cinematography and military. It was first considered British, later it was associated with crime and seduction when on a woman. Trench also kept changing context over time; first from being solely a menswear item to being worn by emancipated women, to later on, in the '50s, becoming an extremely feminine clothing item.

#### *Fashion designers re-designing a trench coat:*

In 1962, the first to re-interpret trench-coat was a French designer Yves Saint Laurent, known as a pioneer in borrowing items from a traditional men's wardrobe and redesigning them for women's (Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris, n.d.). Saint Laurent kept the raglan sleeves, two-row button fastening and a belt which he used to enhance the waist, but shortened and fitted a coat to a woman's body (Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris, n.d.). From then on trench became an YSL as well as most women's signature item; throughout his career, he introduced numerous design variations among which was his Fall-Winter 1980 Haute Couture one made in golden leather. The coat was later worn by Catherine Deneuve on the cover of October issue of ELLE France, photographed by Bettina Rheims (Bowles & Müller, 2008).

Other designers such as Ted Lapidus, Christian Ajuard, and Daniel Hechter offered fashionable variations of it for women in the '70s (Sozzani, 2011b). A decade later, a wide-shouldered trench-coat became a part of a women's power look and a product of many fashion designers. However, toward the end of 1980s Rei Kawakubo's and Yohji Yamamoto's offered a new approach to re-designing it. In 1986 Spring-Summer collection, Yohji Yamamoto took a classic

trench and turned it into an off the shoulder mini dress, keeping only 10 buttons, double row fastening at the front and long sleeves as a reference point. In Summer 1992 Comme des Garçons', Rei Kawakubo cut a beige trench-coat above the waistline and kept it with a raw edge.

Later, for his Spring 2000 collection, Martin Margiela introduced an out-sized grey trench-coat belted with nude nylon stockings. A year later in his 2001 Spring collection, he deconstructed and reconstructed a light beige trench coat, sewing its sleeves turned back to front and removing the lapel as well as front buttoning. For the house of Hermes, he at the time designed an off-white gabardine trench coat, clear off any buttons only with a light beige buffalo horn as a waist belt buckle.

At the same year, Cristopher Bailey got appointed a creative director of Burberry fashion brand. He presented a beige A-line trench-coat with gathered collar and sleeves in his Spring 2007 collection, dip-dyed trench-coats in greys and browns for Spring 2009, „rouched“ trench-coats in nude and pastel colors with enhanced shoulders and knotted draping's in Spring 2010, leather quilted inspired in Spring 2011, two-tone in metallic shades, satin, leather and lace trench-coats as well as a cropped trench-jacket in Spring 2013, hand painted trench-coats in Fall 2014,... Up until his departure in Fall 2018, Cristopher Bailey created numerous iterations of Burberry trench-coats.

Recently, for one of his first collections at Maison Margiela, Spring 2016 Couture, John Galliano presented an off-white trench-coat dress with a pleated bottom and a series of ruffled trench-dresses in jacquard. In Spring 2017, he introduced convertible trench coats in beige and yellow with check underlining; transforming from a coat to a dress and vice versa. In the same year, Galliano created transparent, pleated and cut-out trench-coats, trench dresses and tops for a Fall Couture collection. In the next season, he offered more variations of a cut-out and cut-off trenches, creating a sleeveless version and a trench transformed into a skirt.

In addition, Vetements collective, introduced multiple re-worked trench-coats as well as partnered with Mackintosh for their Spring 2017 collection. In collaboration, they created a traditional looking beige trench-coat, oversized and fitted only at the back with zipper opening, for the brand (Mackintosh, n.d.).

Lutz Huelle similarly introduced his take on a trench-coat, designing it with

gathered sleeves in Spring 2017 and presenting versions of his design in Fall 2017 and Spring 2018.

While remaining the same trench-coats has through the years inspired numerous designer interpretations and continues to do so.

#### *Conclusions:*

A trench-coat, therefore, is initially a men's rain-coat, whose shape derives from a lounge jacket, garment that we today call a suit jacket. Such coat was first popularized by the British World War I officers, for their aristocratic status equated with power (Tynan, 2011). A color khaki and multi-functional details, corresponding to needs of war zone were chosen for it. Consequently, a trench-coat first denoted something that was British, gentlemen's and held an association with war.

It's wide appeal was therefore caused by its links with upper-class wear, and its wide use was enabled by an unfortunate need for officers coming from a lower-class (Tynan, 2011). Being more affordable for the latter, trench coats became purchased more extensively. Such coats also, similarly as other tailor-made clothing items, with time became standardized, making them cheaper to produce and more available for the masses. Being part of post-war "Demob" packages, such standardized coats gained in availability (Chenoune, 1993). Still, most of that was true only for British.

However, soon in 1940's trench-coat started appearing in popular Hollywood movies, which held an extremely wide appeal. Especially with Humphrey Bogart and his crime dramas, trench-coat gained the popularity that was stretching across the globe. With it, such raincoat also started losing its British connotation and acquired a new "mysterious" one. Women actors of the time were drawing both on trench-coats mysterious undertone as well as its masculine. However soon, with the help of extremely feminine actors, it came to be seen as more feminine. In addition, what helped with it losing its masculine connotation, were fashion designers re-appropriating a trench for a women's figure.

Because of trench's continuous adoption into different relevant contexts, it remained relevant through time while barely changing. What this also did, it infused it with different meanings. However, most of those meanings now faded



and like that, a trench coat is now as much women's as it is men's. It also lost most of its other previous connotations and is generally seen as a neutral garment. The trench coat was retaining its image by adopting a timely personality, however, it also kept changing in accordance with particular designer's vision.

Coming from the need and a search for functionality and durability trench-coat is designed to function and to last. Until today Burberry's trench-coats are made in a traditional way following a meticulous clothing construction demanding more than 100 different assembly tasks (Burberry, n.d.). Its consequent functionality might very well be one more reason for its wide adoption both initial and former. However, today it also carries a sentimental value to all who's past generations wore it. For it being worn so widely in the past it enables us to connect to it and to those wearing it before us. In addition, a trench, as a clothing item integral to the Western phenomenon fashion, spread together with it across the globe and it now connects us also to one another globally.

## 3.5 A White Shirt

### *Physical definition:*

A white shirt is an upper garment, made out of a white cotton woven, or a blend. Shirting mostly exists in a plain weave, twill, panama, and their variations. The fabric is fused with an interlining to stiffen the parts of a collar and the cuffs.

Signature features of a classic white shirt are its color, stiff „turn down“ pointed collar, long sleeves with stiff „barrel“ cuffs and the placket with the buttoning in the middle front. Also, a shirt has a yoke in the upper back often reaching to the front over the shoulders and one or two pleats positioned in the back of a garment, under the yoke. Long sleeves end with the sleeve placket at the wrist which often buttons with one button. One, two or no folds are located next to a sleeve placket and directed towards it. Cuffs are attached to the sleeves and button with one or two buttons. Traditionally used is „mother of the pearl“ type buttons. Sometimes a pocket is added on one side of the chest. A shirt commonly has a semi-fitted silhouette and a curved bottom hem longer at front and back.

### *Origin of the white shirt and history of its use:*

Use of a white undergarment among men can be traced as far back as to the first millennium (Brough, 2013). However, a white shirt that we know today developed from the white, loosely fitted, linen undergarment worn by men in the 1800's, in tandem with a suit and a cravat (Hollander, 2016). At the time such simple garment and its color, represented social ideals such as austerity, modesty, and cleanliness (Brough, 2013). Since, then, the working classes were less able to maintain cleanliness of such a delicate color, a clean white shirt was also a sign of aristocratic status (Brough, 2013). Therefore, a term „white collar“ came to refer to an elite, while the term „blue collar“ emerged describing a working class (Brough, 2013). According to Brough (2013), the following term developed from a usual practice of working-class coloring their shirt in an indigo blue dye to mask their stains.

A white shirt was desirable among men since it represented values and therefore an ideal of the time. Similar strive for the ideal and influence through the ideal clothing is exaggerated by George Bryan „Beau“ Brummell, a late 18th-century British dandy (Chenoune, 1993). „Beau“ Brummell, adopted a gentleman's attire, clothing that would separate aristocratic men from those of lower classes, (Chenoune, 1993). According to Chenoune (1993), one of those items was an impeccably white shirt, other was a perfectly fitted men's suit. In addition to attaining a higher societal status, for a time, Brummel additionally popularized a shirt and a suit. He served as an example to many, with his refined style.

According to Chonoune (1993), Brummell's attention to detail and a desire for a sharp look inspired him to search for the ways of eliminating the wrinkles and adding firmness to his shirts; this led to him to use a technique of starching on them. This too, soon developed into the fashion of the era, (Chenoune, 1993). Starch was quickly regularly used for enhancing shirt fronts or at least for collars. This newly invented technique gave way to an extremely high turn up collar introduced by „Beau“ Brummell, (Chenoune, 1993). According to Chenoune, (1993) „Beau“, himself wore a shirt collar elongated up to the end of his ears. This exaggerated „style“ of a turned up collar later became synonymous with dandies as well as with an elite, (Chenoune, 1993). As Brough (2013) suggests, those collars were disabling the movement of their wearers, however, since the men wearing them did not need to lean during their work this collar style was marking the aristocratic class.

Chenoune (1993), mentions how, in the early 19th century, the cloth was very scarce and laundry services expensive. With the white shirt's increased popularity, men started using detachable shirt collars and cuffs for a cleaner look, (Chenoune, 1993). Such collars attached to a shirt with buttons or studs, (Chenoune, 1993). Since most of the garment was then covered with the vest and other upper clothes, detachable collars functioned well in keeping a clean appearance of a shirt and saved money. Around 1900, Chenoune (1993) says, debates started surfacing, around the way a shirt collar should remain, stiff or soft, detachable or fixed. Some advocated a stiff detachable collar, among other because it eased tying of the cravat and minimized laundry costs, (Chenoune, 1993). Others, Chenoune (1993) mentions, preferred a softer, more func-

tional and comfortable collar. What prevailed is the latter; lightly stiffened and sewn in turn down collar (Chenoune, 1993). One who helped popularized it was Prince of Wales, future Edward VIII, with his stylistic influence and preference for a relaxed way of dressing, (Chenoune, 1993). Furthermore, Chenoune (1993) suggests, he made popular colored and patterned versions of a shirt.

Until today a technique of starching is used for ironing shirts and their collars, while collars are accordingly to their past enhanced with a stiff fusible. Its other integral element was invented at the time, its front buttoning.

Hopkins reports that „in 1871 Brown, Davis & Co, an English shirt-maker registered the first full button-front shirt for men” and that “previously all shirts had been pulled on over the head“ (Hopkins, 2011, p. 87).

In the late 19th century, advancements in automation of clothing construction and standardization of clothing patterns gave way to ready-made shirts. Before shirts were an expensive and handmade product of tailors, but later industrialization enabled their cheaper production and maintenance. With the advent of ready-made clothing, some tailors and men went for the embellished shirt front, decorated either with hand embroidery or folds, to distinguish a custom-made shirt from a ready-made one, (Chenoune, 1993).

A white shirt was from the beginning necessarily worn with a suit jacket, vest, pants, and a cravat. Through time, vests became rarely used, and the shirt started coming to the front (Chenoune, 1993; Brough, 2013). However, it was not until the 1950's that a shirt lost a connotation of an undergarment and became acceptable worn alone without a jacket (Brough, 2013).

Also for being a part of a business suit, ever since the late 17th century, a white shirt represented seriousness and good work ethic. A person asserting its position as such, according to Brough (2013), was among other, a founder of IBM Thomas J. Watson, demanding of each of his workers to adopt a white shirt as an everyday working uniform at his firm. A white shirt is until today regarded as a serious uniform of a businessman or woman.

Women, had their own variation of white undergarments, before, but later adopted characteristics of men's shirt, such as a collar and front buttoning

(Brough, 2013). Similarly, as men's dress, women's dress was moving towards practicality. Towards the end of the Victorian era, women started participating in leisure activities, which were before largely a domain of men (Brough, 2013). This required them to wear a comfortable wardrobe allowing movement. An example of such a wardrobe was a men's shirt. In addition, their use of a men's attire such as shirts went hand in hand with their battle for equal rights and emancipation. A phenomenon of women borrowing from a men's wardrobe soon became propagated by the fashion designer of the early 20th century, Coco Chanel. She has herself often directly took clothing from the men. Furthermore, she used those garments as a base for her new fashion that she believed would free the women both symbolically and literally, of the past conventions related to their dress.

In the 1940s and 50's, a classic white shirt found its way on the big screens and on more women with Katherine Hepburn, Lauren Bacall, Ava Gardner, Audrey Hepburn, and Marlene Dietrich wearing it (Sozzani, 2011a). At the time the shirt was either worn in a masculine way or particularly feminine way, tied at the waist and unbuttoned at the top as practiced by Marilyn Monroe.

A white shirt, in essence, hasn't changed much from the beginning of the 19th century. However, it was changing its places, styles, and sometimes even details. A few variations arose, a first example of it being a „button-down“ collar invented by the American students in the early 20th century, part of Ivy League and later on patented by Brookes Brothers, (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017). Its collar was buttoned down to prevent ends of a collar turning upwards during sports activities. This same type of a shirt was adopted by the Seven Sisters, a group of female college students part of most prestigious universities in America (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017).

According to Brough (2013) in the 1950s and '60s, the invention of synthetic fabrics encouraged a change in the material construction of a shirt. Cotton and polyester blends were introduced into shirting. The feature of this new material composite was to allow easy maintenance with no need for ironing. Yet, in comparison with pure cotton shirts, polyester blends were less comfortable as they would not absorb the moisture and allow enough breathability. No-iron synthetic blends soon fell out of favor and were replaced by chemically treated cotton (Brough, 2013).

Around the same time, „Ted's“ a subculture of a working-class British youth adopted the style and fascination over the era of British gentleman and dandies (Chenoune, 1993). They appropriated a style of Edwardian elite such as tailored suits and white shirts (Chenoune, 1993). A more mainstream stylistic change happened in the era of „Carnaby Street“ when shirt's cuffs and collar grew larger, and a white shirt was many times replaced for a more colorful and patterned and in other ways an embellished version of it (Chenoune, 1993). By that time a shirt also became more fitted and was often worn unbuttoned at the top and without a tie. Mod's inspired by Saville Row and Ivy League fashion also sported a white shirt in tandem with skinny ties (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017). Also, skinheads of the '70s, took it for their own and wore it with a button down collar and rolled up sleeves.

*Fashion designers re-designing a white shirt:*

Later in the 20th century, the '80s brought back an appreciation for a classic business look. This was an era of „power suits“ advertised by Hugo Boss for men and Jil Sander for women. However, it was also an era of a designer shirt, re-appropriated by numerous designers in various styles.

Most notably, Italian fashion designer Gianfranco Ferré offered his take on it, in fact numerous. Throughout his career, a white shirt became his signature item. Ferré designed white shirts from luxurious materials such as taffeta, organza, satin as well as fine cotton poplin. His shirts were voluminous, structured, embroidered, laced, ... They were often flared, with oversized collars, ruffled or gathered and overall rich in design and effect they produced. An example of it is a white shirt with an oversized double lapel style collar from his Spring Summer 1982 collection. Or a white sleeveless shirt – bodice with a collar like a waist from his Fall Winter 1982.

In the 90's fashion atmosphere infused with ideals of minimalism; Armani, Calvin Klein, and Donna Karan adopted a white shirt and re-designed it in detail.

At the same time, Belgian designer Ann Demeulemeester, part of Antwerp Six got known for her take on minimalism and white shirts. In her Spring Summer 1997, she presented a number of white shirts and shirt dresses, asymmetrically buttoned and worn off shoulder some with an added strap. In Spring 2000,

she introduced them without cuffs and covered with a black mesh tank top. In Spring – Summer 2002, silk shirts, gathered at the edges with a low neckline and a white shirt dress from multiple joint shirts.

In addition to being re-designed by fashion designers of the decade, white shirt was a common stylistic choice for fashion editorials, especially in the era of supermodels. Vogue Italia's September 1991 issue was featuring Linda Evangelista in a white shirt with a turned up collar captured by Steven Meisel (Sozzani, 2011a). But one of the most iconic appearances of a white shirt on 1992 April issue of Vogue US on the occasion of 100th anniversary of a magazine, when 10 supermodels of the time wore a white men's GAP shirt, with rolled up sleeves, unbuttoned and tied at the waist. The photo was taken by Patric Demarchelier and was often re-appropriated (Sozzani, 2011a). For them, as for many, a white shirt served as a white canvas for the personality. For its neutral look, a white shirt gave an emphasis on a persons' individual looks and even exposed a character.

#### *Conclusions:*

A white shirt developed according to the modest male fashion of the Victorian era. Its white color in addition to purity, soberness and other clerical ideals, represented the ideal of cleanliness. Due to the nature of their status, lower classes were unable to retain the whiteness of such shirt. That is why a shirt became to represent the elite, and soon the establishment, which was in close relation to such aristocratic class. Representing aristocracy and the ideals of the time made a white shirt appear desirable for many.

A shirt acquired most of its main features, through its history of use, while starting as a loose white tunic. Towards the end of the 19th century, a white shirt stopped changing and remained the same ever since. While it simultaneously kept changing. Especially after its transition from a tailor-made to an industrially made garment, many of white shirt's re-appropriations arose. Each of those variations adhered either to the fashion of the time, specific designer... If a white shirt wasn't changing, it was shifting contexts or was being made attractive by the influential personas of the time wearing it.

A white shirt gives us an insight into our changing society for being present in it for such a long time. By extending in its use, from the elite to the work-

ing classes and on the torsos of women, a white shirt illustrates shifts in our society as well as its gradual democratization. From being a potent symbol of wealth and class differentiation it over the time as served to women in the battle against it. By adopting a shirt as a symbol of establishment and male power, women used it in their fight for equal rights. Similarly, its gradual adoption by masses of men shows us the impact industrialization and globalization had on our society.

Developed according to the modest male fashion of the Victorian era, a shirt is often described as minimalistic and a „blank slate“ for showing the personality of the wearer. Similarly, it has been serving fashion designers, as a base for expressing their style and design.



## 3.6 A Pencil Skirt

*Physical definition:*

A form-fitting skirt, beginning at the waist, with a hemline ending around the knee. A pencil skirt, has either a vent or a pleat most commonly at the back, sometimes on a side or in front.

*Origin of a pencil skirt and a history of its use:*

A pencil skirt is often considered a descendant of the first restrictive skirt of the 20th century, the „hobble skirt“ (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017). Such skirt was most likely invented by the French designer Paul Poiret in the early 1910s (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017). A shape of a „hobble skirt“ was full at the top and narrow above the ankles, creating a desired hourglass silhouette.

Variations of such skirts were at the time designed by designers Jeanne Paquin and Lady Duff Gordon – Lucile (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017). However, immediately after introduction, the skirt has proven itself extremely impractical, considering it was worn at the time when women gained a more active presence in the society and needed clothing to go with their active lifestyle.

During World War I, clothing had to become even more practical and hobble skirts went out of favor (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017). War rationing soon gave rise to the first fitted skirts.

Vogue 1940 under the section Fashion: Paris Openings-As usual described a than up and coming fashion as; „The new narrow skirts. Narrow as a pencil...“ (Fashion: Paris Openings-As usual, 1940, p. 51).

Such skirts were designed by Molyneux, Paquin, and Schiaparelli (Fashion: Paris Openings-As usual, 1940). Throughout the World War II, narrow skirts' desirability continued for their wise use of fabric (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017). They were often paired with a jacket in the same material and

like that a part of a women's suit. In America, fashion designer, Adele Simpson popularized a women's pencil suit as a wartime attire, (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017).

While in Europe, a „New look“ introduced in 1947 by Christian Dior for some time put it out of fashion and put an emphasis on much lower hems and fuller skirt. Yet soon, hemlines again started rising which accounted for a rebirth, this time of an even slimmer skirt.

At the time, Vogue wrote: „...deviations in silhouette and material. Skirts shorter 14 1/2” to 16” from the ground. Skirts generally narrow...“ (Fashion: Paris tendencies, 1950, p. 124).

While featuring tight-fitting skirts from Dior, Balmain, and Piguet (Fashion: Paris tendencies, 1950).

Shortly after its re-introduction in the 1950s, fashionable women of the Hollywood cinema widely adopted it. Marlene Dietrich wore it in Alfred Hitchcock „Stage Fright“ in 1950 as part of a skirt suit. In 1954 it was part of Grace Kelly's celadon green suit in „Rear Window“. Later on (1959) Marilyn Monroe wore it in a particularly seductive way while catching the train for Florida in „Some Like it Hot“. Inspired by the fashionable and daring movie stars of the time, women started adopting a seductive and revealing look of the pencil skirt.

Dior was and still is a designer most commonly associated with a pencil skirt. He has re-used it for many of his different styles. In 1953 he used it as part of his Tulip line, silhouette fuller at the top and slimmer at the bottom. Furthermore, it was a large part of his H-line (1954) and Y-line (1955) collections.

*An example of his Y-line look was a dark grey woollen suit, with an over the knee reaching pencil skirt from featured in September issue of Vogue 1955, with a caption: „Dior's New Line: Bulk Against Slimness“ (Cover: Vogue, 1955).*

In the second half of the 20th century, with the introduction of Lycra, skirts became even tighter. Furthermore, the skirt's hemline was rising. It reached

its peak at the end of the '60s with the introduction of miniskirts. Pencil skirts were back again in the '80s with the modern businesswoman. Worn separately with a shirt or a blouse, or with an addition of a matching jacket for a female version of a suit. This time the skirts were reaching above the knee.

*Fashion designers re-designing a pencil skirt:*

In the '80s Montana and Mugler embraced it and created it in leather or latex and paired with a broadly shouldered jacket. Afterward, in the '90s, it was adopted by minimalists such as Calvin Klein and Donna Karan. As well as by Martin Margiela who turned it inside out in Fall 1996, elongated it in 1997 and scaled it out in his Fall 2000 collection, fitting it on the side of the waist.

In 2015, Vetements collective introduced it turned back to front, oversized, cut on the side and fitted. For Fall 2017, they presented it raw edged in an opening look.

*Conclusion:*

A pencil skirt is one of the women's essential clothing items. Its restrictive nature makes it limiting for the woman wearing it, however at the same time serves them as a powerful tool for seduction. For hugging the women's figure and emphasizing its feminine features, such fitted skirt is also empowering them. A pencil skirt is many times part of the women's version of the suit, often referred to as, a skirt suit. Such skirt varied in length throughout the changing times however it was not greatly subject to changes in fashion. While it was still inspiring fashion designers to offer a personal take on it, and it does so still today.

## 3.7 A Little Black Dress

### **General definition:**

**A renowned fashion scholar and author of „The Black Dress“, Valerie Steel (2007) suggests a little black dress is a „concept“ rather than a specific dress. It is a dress that is black. A word little also denotes it not being full length. Shape and details are its variable and they change.**

### *Origin of the little black dress and its history of use:*

A color black largely defines a little black dress; therefore, its origin is strongly linked with the use of the color black in women's clothing.

Black has since the early days primarily been associated with concepts such as night and death, sin and evil (Steele, 2007). It is the opposite of white which meant purity and innocence. Therefore, it has also had frequently been associated with the mourning of the dead.

According to Steele „the fashion for black developed in Italy as early as the fourteenth century and spread rapidly from Italy to Northern Europe...“ (2007, p. 1).

At the times of its early use, black dye was rare and expensive, worn only by the wealthy ruling classes (Steele, 2007).

Catherine de Medici, queen of France, lost her husband Henry II in 1559 and mourned him dressed in black for the rest of her life (Steele, 2007). Similarly, after the death of her husband in 1861, Queen Victoria took on a lifelong wearing of black (Steele, 2007). In the 16th century a Spanish ruler Charles V and his descendant Philip II, who favoured black dress, popularized it in their court and later on, in other (Steele, 2007). Most likely inspired by the Spanish, Italian courtier in his book on etiquette „The Book of the Courtier“ published in 1528, advertises a black dress as a new fashion to an Italian court (Steele,

2007; Mendes, 1999). Being closely connected with the ruling classes color black also started connoting power and authority, (Steele, 2007; Mendes, 1999). Until the 17th century, both men and women on Spanish court adopted color black (Mendes, 1999). Most of the times a black garment has been worn with contrasting white collar and cuffs (Steele, 2007).

A prominent Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens (1577 – 1640) painted several portraits representing women in black dresses (Steele, 2007). Such were; 1609 Portrait of young Spanish women with a Rosary and a 1606 – 1607 Portrait of Veronica Spinola Doria in a black dress with golden embroidery (Steele, 2007). Maria Cayetana de Silva, Duchess of Alba (1762 – 1802), and a muse of painter Francisco de Goya was also known as “The Black Duchess” for her frequent use of black attire (Steele, 2007). In 1797, after the loss of her husband, Francisco de Goya painted her in one of her black mourning dresses (Steele, 2007).

The popularity of a black dress then spread from Spanish court to other European countries; however still reserved for an elite and seen as prestigious in the eyes of lower classes, (Steele, 2007). In the 17th century, a color black was overshadowed by a colorful French fashion (Steele, 2007). In the following century, a white color prevailed for a women's clothing, but it wasn't long until the black gained back its prominence.

Also, a color of priests, black in religious context carried an image of sobriety and modesty (Beward, 2016). By depicting ideals of the Protestant religion, black gained an appeal in most of the predominantly Protestant countries in Europe such as Netherlands and England (Beward, 2016; Steele, 2007). In the 19th century England, a color black was therefore resonating with the times that celebrated modest appearance. It soon also became a uniform color for men's attire, a black suit. In addition, dandies gave a color an elegant feel.

In the middle of the century with the introduction of chemical dyes, black became available to lower classes and therefore widely used (Steele, 2007). The dark color was favoured by the working class for its versatility and practicality due to its ability to mask stains (Steele, 2007). At the time black was also frequently used for women's „riding habits“ (Steele, 2007; Mendes, 1999). Fitted jacket and a long skirt were made in matching dark color which masked the dirt coming from horseback riding (Steele, 2007; Mendes, 1999).

European aristocrats adopted black for mourning a long time ago, but it

wasn't until the 19th century that it became widely used as a color for grieving, (Steele, 2007; Mendes, 1999). Adhering to strict religious rules, widows of the time mourned their husband's dressed in black for as long as 2 years following their death (Steele, 2007; Mendes, 1999). Being closely connected to widows and married women, at the time, black dress was considered a symbol of adulthood and unsuitable for younger girls (Mendes, 1999; Steele, 2007). Black when worn by a young woman, had a negative connotation.

In the case of John Singer Sargent's 1884 painting of a young Virginie Gautreau, a black dress with diamond straps, cost young Mme. Gautreau her social respectability, after the painting, was being exhibited in Paris Salon (Steele, 2007). Later on, when painted in a white dress by Gustave Curtois exposing even more skin, the painting was well received by the public.

Around 1900 a fashion for wearing black re-emerged, according to (Mendes, 1999). Although this still wasn't the time of a little black dress. Women have not yet entirely freed themselves from dresses that were overly voluminous, embellished, corseted, heavy and generally uncomfortable. These dresses were big rather than little. The „little black dress“ was likely born in the late 1920s when women's hemlines started rising, and the popularity of color black in a women's dress was at its peak (Steele, 2007; Mendes, 1999). Women's black dresses became shorter than they ever were and got referred to as the „little“ (Steele, 2007).

During and after World War I, black was again widely worn, presumably because of the state of mourning of many (Steele, 2007; Mendes, 1999). After World War I, fashion became more functional, women started acquiring freedom and space in previously male-dominated activities. Besides work, such was also sports and other leisure activities. For those occasions, women needed a comfortable attire. Suffragettes have long been fighting for women's hemlines to rise and enable them freer movement. In the early 20's century, they have finally been increased to around a mid-calf length.

Accordingly, with their newly acquired freedom and needs, fashion designers started supplying women with shorter and also less restrictive clothing. One of the first designers to work against that traditional image of an ornamented and restrictive women's clothing was Gabrielle „Coco“ Chanel. With a desire to entirely free a woman's body she created fashion with a relaxed fit and

comfortable monotone fabrics. She was one of the first to use cotton jersey, traditionally a men's underwear fabric, re-appropriated a men's white shirt, a tie, tweed woollen jacket, and a trouser suit, for women.

Herself, she was a woman of her time, independent and empowered and wished her designs reflect the times in a way she did. She lived in an era of modernist artists, and her philosophy has followed theirs.

One of her first widely popular designs was a little black dress published in October issue of American Vogue magazine (Steele, 2007; Fashion: The debut of the winter mode, 1926). The dress that Chanel presented was long sleeved, reaching just below the knee, from black crêpe de Chine. It was relaxed in its fit, narrow from the bust to the hips and from there on to the end of the dress (Fashion: The debut of the winter mode, 1926). In the front were V-shaped „pin tucks“ pointing towards the middle of the garment (Fashion: The debut of the winter mode, 1926).

October issue of Vogue described the dress as: „The Chanel „Ford”  
– the frock that all the world will wear...” (Fashion: The debut of the  
winter mode, 1926, p. 69).

They were both targeting the masses, Ford with black model T-vehicles and Chanel with her little black dress (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017). Both Henry Ford and Coco Chanel also exposed practicality of the color black (Antonelli, Fisher Millar, & Kramer, 2017). The appearance in Vogue gave Coco Chanel a lot of exposure and association with the particular dress, therefore until this day she is often regarded as its inventor (Steele, 2007). However, she was not the first one to present a little black dress nor was this the first occasion of black being used as a fashionable color for purposes other than mourning (Steele, 2007). It is true that a black dress was when introduced by Coco Chanel still primarily associated with mourning and was also still generally considered inappropriate for younger women (Steele, 2007). Therefore, the use of black in women's garments was quite innovative for the time. While other designers like, Poiret, Drecoll, Patou, and Molyneux have designed short black dresses at the same time, Chanel was the one who popularized it, also because it collided perfectly with her style and design philosophy (Fashion: The debut of

the winter mode, 1926).

A little black dress reached simplicity, that was before reserved only for men's garments. Such dress was in high contrast with the embellished dresses of the past that served many times as a showcase of men's wealth. It was a woman's equivalent of a man's suit and similarly became their uniform of the time, (Mendes, 1999). Throughout the depression of the early '30s and war of the '40s, little black dress, as well as little black women's suit, were a rational choice for women (Fashion: Brief facts re the little black dress, 1944). The black dress was economical and practical, masking stains and enabling women to maintain an elegant look.

Vogue from 1944 in its section Fashion states: „Ten out of ten women have one – but ten out of ten want another because a little black dress leads the best-rounded life. It is complete chameleon about moods and times and places. Has the highest potential chic (only if well-handled)“ (Fashion: Brief facts re the little black dress, 1944, pp. 101,103).

Little black dress was considered extremely practical and versatile, easily dressed up or down and like that suitable for almost any occasion, daywear or eveningwear. A black dress gained an elegant feel also for a big being part of glamorous movie star's attire. Black, especially black satin dresses were the ones favoured by the movie makers of the time. Black and white movies needed contrasting clothing with the right effect. Little black dress was also favoured by producers for its array of meanings that it carried. Furthermore, it not only outlined a person wearing it but put enough attention to its character.

In 1931, Gloria Swanson starred in „Tonight or never“ wearing Chanel's little black dress (Steele, 2007). Marlene Dietrich wore it in „Morocco“ (1930), designed by Travis Branton. Greta Garbo acted in a black dress designed by a costume designer of the era Adrian in „As You Desire Me“ in 1932. Jean Harlow, Joan Crawford, Katherine Hepburn, and Bette Davis are all known for their appearances in black dresses in the 1930s and 40's Hollywood movies. Other influential artists, such as French singer Edith Piaf wore exclusively black dresses for her performances. Martha Graham, an avant-garde dancer, replaced tutus and light



colored ballet dancer's attire for a black dress. Furthermore, singer Juliet Greco was known for her black robes. In all the cases one of the primary reasons a black dress was used, was to put the attention to an artist's expression.

*Fashion designers re-designing a little black dress:*

Around the same time, Hubert de Givenchy created a black dress for Audrey Hepburn's role of Sabrina (1954). Besides he, a few years later, created her iconic image for Holly Golightly in „Breakfast at Tiffany's“, In the same year, Chanel designed a little black dress for Delphine Seyrig in „Last Year at Marienbad“. Another iconic appearance of a designer little black dress on screen was in „Belle de Jour“ (1967) with Catherine Deneuve wearing a YSL short black dress with a satin white collar and cuffs.

Throughout the decades' little black dress changed according to times and fashion of the era. Many different designs of it were presented by different fashion designers throughout the 20th century. Elsa Schiaparelli wore black dresses and frequently designed them for her influential clients such as Wallis Warfield Simpson (Mendes, 1999). She has many times used black as a base for her embroideries.

Black as a neutral color gave attention to its shape and design. Therefore it was a color of choice also for designers creating with cut and shapes, such as Christian Dior and Cristobal Balenciaga (Mendes, 1999). On February 12, 1947, Christian Dior introduced a new silhouette to a post-war era. A „New Look“ determined a silhouette for the era which resulted in most little black dresses created at the time. Dior furthermore found black essential to women's clothing, and he asserted he could easily design solely in two colors, white and black (Mendes, 1999).

In 1950 Cristobal Balenciaga created a black gown with balloon hem, a year later he designed a black taffeta wrap dress with a voluminous gathered hem. In 1957 he introduced a short black „sack dress“ with a straight fit, and year after it a „baby doll“ black lace dress. Among many, one of his most known as „envelope dress“, worn by Alberta Tiburzi and photographed by Hiro for Harper's Bazaar in June 1967.

During the '60s and 70's colorful fashion, a presence of little black dress was more of an exception than a rule. If present, a black dress has usually been

combined with white or a vibrant color. Also, it was almost necessarily short. An example of it is Biba's jersey mini-dress worn by Twiggy in April issue of 1967 Vogue magazine (Steele, 2007).

In the 1980s women wished to dress to reflect their ability to work on all the levels of a corporate world. They wanted clothing that would make them look professional and authoritative while still appearing feminine. Among other, fashion designers Azzedine Alaïa, Thierry Mugler, and Claude Montana brought back a little black dress, interpreting it each in their own way for a „power“ woman of the era. Alaïa created it tight fitting from silk, wool and synthetic jerseys as well as leather. Mugler and Montana, on the other hand, created black dresses with dramatic shapes, and other effects. For most of the designers of the era, enhanced shoulders were a must-have addition to a little black dress.

At the same time, Japanese designers entered the world of Parisian fashion. With their extensive use of color black at the time, Rei Kawakubo and Yohji Yamamoto offered numerous takes on a little black dress. From one season to another they re-defined a dress and a color black as we knew it. An indigo black was introduced by them, that is clothing continuously dyed in indigo blue to resemble black.

Towards the end of the decade, another fashion movement has started and fully adopted a puritan look of a black dress, minimalism. Its pioneers were American designers, Calvin Klein, and Donna Karan as well as Italian Giorgio Armani and German Jil Sander.

Donna Karan found black dresses elegant and practical for modern working women. Her little black dresses were many times made out of a comfortable woollen jersey with an asymmetrical cut. Calvin Klein favoured minimal and perfectly finished garments an example of his „little“ black dress was his iconic slip dress. On the other hand, Armani marked black as outdated and used a dark shade of grey instead.

#### *Conclusions:*

Meaning of a little black dress is therefore largely that of the color black. However, for the array of meanings that this color acquired through its history of use, such as; death, mourning, modesty, and elegance, such dress can mean many things and is therefore very versatile (Steele, 2007). Many call it a female

equivalent of a men's black suit and a first female classic. It is a clothing item that derives from a traditional women's dress but obeys „rules“ of practicality and modesty of modern men's dress. A little black dress is an extremely reduced form of what was previously known as a female dress. Before, women had borrowed and re-appropriated classic clothing items from the men's wardrobe, if desiring practicality and versatility in their dress. Also, if they wished not to adhere to centuries-old conventions on women's attire and behaviour.

With a little black dress, women were freed of their restrictive past dress while still being feminine. In addition their previous emphasised distinction, while this one tended to equalize them. A little black dress for its neutral look put an emphasis on its wearer and their character. However, it was still largely a subject of fashion. Until today, a little black dress serves as a black canvas for designers and for individual's expression. However every such expression is neutralized by its neutral color.

With a little black dress, black is a standard, and a shape is a variable. The form is changing and reflecting times and a designers input. This makes it a good lens for looking at how a form changes through time, or how different designers created shapes differently. It is considered timeless but ever evolving, still offering itself for the re-interpretation. Its concept is timeless, versatile and democratic.

## 3.8 What are Classic Wardrobe Items?

### 3.8.1 Quality

Garments that we consider classic wardrobe items derive from the tailoring tradition of modern Western man's clothing or were in some way inspired by it. Such an approach to making has been evolving and perfecting with the help of tailors through centuries and has because of that reached a certain level of maturity.

Such wardrobe items were also defined by certain ideals. These ideals were established in the 18th century, by Western men in accordance with their time. Their time, was Neo-classical as well as marked by the rise of democracy and Protestantism in Northern Europe (Hollander, 2016; Breward, 2016). Classical, democratic and clerical ideals defined a men's dress of the time and created an aesthetic for clothing that celebrates purity, modesty, and universality (Hollander, 2016; Breward, 2016).

Such aesthetic has shown not only to be of that particular time or of particular men but of quite many. Throughout later time, these aesthetic values and a way of making, have inspired other items that we today call classic wardrobe items.

Many of those modern wardrobe classics were a product of a designer or a tailor, either known or unknown, who was first mastering the craft of tailoring and creating in accordance with the particular aesthetic as well as contributing to it with his idea for improvement. Usually, their innovation was a reflection of changing times, it reflected progress and changing needs but was built on top of an existing and still useful construction process and aesthetic.

Creators of classic wardrobe items were concerned with a look and a function that would benefit many, for a long time. Whether a classic item was created for the purposes of a uniform, workwear or every day, it would always consider a need of a group of people instead of a specific individual.

## 3.8.2 Universal

Classic wardrobe items are garments that are common to many. Their design and aesthetic answers to the need and want of several instead of answering to that of a particular individual. Because of that many have found a use in them and they are seen to be worn widely.

One of underlying causes for their universality might be an ability of a tailoring technique to create clothing that would fit and be accessible to many. Also, tailoring was modernizing itself constantly, it was evolving and updating, responding to new technology, all with the aim to democratize clothing.

In comparison, womenswear was long very fitted and very much dependant on a specific figure of each woman, such way of being disabled its standardization and universality (Hollander, 2016).

Menswear, however, enabled adjustments of patterns for different figures as well as their standardization and therefore their availability to many. An ability of tailoring technique to move towards standardization allowed clothing deriving from it to be produced faster and cheaper which increased its availability and adoption.

Also universal is these items' particular color palette. Colors such as black of a suit, leather biker jacket and a little black dress, white of a shirt, indigo of jeans and khaki of a trench-coat are all quite neutral and could also be called serious, and modest. Such color palette was adopted amidst its practicality to express the ideal and values of a Western man, for whom these wardrobe items were initially intended for (Hollander, 2016; Breward, 2016).

What might be a reason for universality and therefore practicality of these colors are multiple meanings that these colors have acquired throughout their history of use (Steele, 2007). They have all been present in clothing before and used in a variety of ways. This gives them a neutral feel and an ability to fit in different occasions (Steele, 2007).

Such clothing has throughout decades or centuries of use been adopted by different people and used in different contexts. Not only it was adopted, but it itself enabled others to adopt it. Because of that, it was soon taken on by the

opposite gender, by different people of different eras and place, as well as different styles,... However, what truly makes them universal is not their ability to take on different styles but their ability to lose them (Miller & Woodward, 2012). These items were corresponding with their history, among other, once men's and Western, but have because of their ability to lose it now became genderless and universally adopted (Miller & Woodward, 2012).

When women first adopted those classic men's items, such as a trouser suit, a shirt, jeans, trench-coat, such an act symbolized sexual provocation or a fight against what was established as men's. Women's adoption of men's wardrobe similarly went hand in hand with their battle for equality. However now these items on them acquired an almost genderless feel. They now serve for women as they do for men, as universal items, fitting in every occasion, and on everyone.

Today, we see classics such as trench-coat worn in various parts of the world worn by everyone (Miller & Woodward, 2011). When a clothing item reaches such wide appeal, when it is worn across gender, ages, and cultures we can start talking about it as a truly democratic clothing item.

However, coming from the West and the way it presented itself to many other cultures, these clothing items for many cultures once represented authority and conformity. A suit, for example, was first introduced to Indians by British colonialists and to Japanese by Western merchants and later adopted in their process of modernization, often called Westernization (Breward, 2016). Still, now decades after their introduction to other cultures those clothing items lost such connotation and acquired a neutral feel (Miller & Woodward, 2012). Classics such as jeans are now seen at home in most parts of the world and as a universal clothing item (Miller & Woodward, 2012).

### 3.8.3 Timeless

Classic wardrobe items have been created in the past, have survived changing trends and remain relevant in this present day.

The reason that these clothing items stayed relevant almost unchanged was to a large extent because influential figures such as trendy musicians, movie stars and fashion designers kept bringing them back to life. They infused them with new life and meaning which gave them new relevance but also a connotation, which now according to Miller & Woodward (2012), mostly has faded.

These items are able to adopt any kind of style and bend to fit the changing times, in fact, many of them. Also their way of making, tailoring was following the times. It was modernizing itself, the construction and material of classics. For their ability to adjust to changing times, while largely remaining the same, classics are called timeless. Their presence is, therefore, a long lasting one. For being with us for so long, having been the items of choice for many of our great-grandparents, our parents, and ourselves, these garments give a feeling of belonging as well as stability.

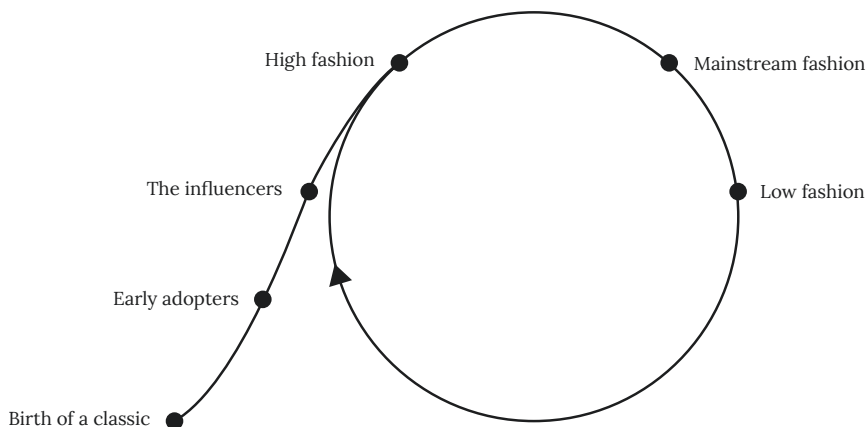


FIGURE 2.  
Lifecycle  
of a classic  
wardrobe item.

Note. Retrived from The Museum of Modern Art (2017, 5:41:05).

## 3.9 Re-Designing Classic Wardrobe Items

Classic wardrobe items hold a capability to be simultaneously in and out of fashion. They exist almost unchanged together with their numerous re-designs. The space that they offer, to enable their adaptations has invited numerous designers to contribute to them, throughout their lifetime. Such practice of re-designing has been important for the existence of those garments, for infusing them with additional relevance and like that recovering their popularity.

By re-designing classic garments designers are expressing interest in them and endorsing their value, while also acknowledging the space offered for their adaptation. However, they also acknowledge the parts having to remain intact for a thing that they are changing to preserve its identity. For if these items would lose their essential look, they would no longer be garments that were re-designed. In addition, their properties such as timelessness and universality might be lost. Such classic properties might well be what made designer value these items in the first place.

Overall, re-designing classic wardrobe items necessarily means to re-appropriate a past design and identify it as relevant. With it, a designer might want to show an appreciation of a certain making or aesthetic tradition, of the items' universality, timelessness... or he might simply want to address many with his designs.

We know those classic garments well and are because of that able to see clearly the contribution on the part of a designer. Such designer re-interpretations, therefore, give us a good lens into different times as well as into an aesthetic of a specific designer.

Some designers are more attracted to classic wardrobe items than others. If a designer is interested in clothing that people wear in everyday life, such classic clothing would be in the core of his design work. Often times re-appropriating classics was a response to fashion that has drifted too far from what people wore in their everyday. As it was the case with Martin Margiela, who's designs, aimed at creating an opposition to the exaggerated and highbrow fashion of



the 1980s. In some other cases, the adoption of classics was also due to their puritan look. Their neutral aesthetic attracted minimalists such as Calvin Klein, Donna Karan, and Jil Sander. Whilst they also intrigued designers interested in questioning the established Western idea of clothing, such as Japanese Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo.

I believe that even if a designer would not be interested in the existing clothing but in the future of clothing, he might be interested in already established garments such as classics, for they would enable him to convey his idea of the future to the wider audience. For example, a 3D printed trench-coat might come into use, before an abstract 3D garment presenting inventive forms would. Similarly, these classic items form each their own category in the fashion industry. Fashion houses are offering one or more varieties of each, every season because these are the items that appeal most and are because of that most sellable or bankable.

The practice of re-designing items such as classics, could by some designers be seen as lacking in designers' originality since this one is compromised to retain the items' identity. However, many designers have used their classic characteristics to express their designer identity and values.



# Chapter 4

## Practical Part

### 4.1 Re-Designing Classic Wardrobe Items According to My Designer Identity and My First Memories of Them

#### 4.1.1 Inspiration No. 1

##### 4.1.1.1 *My designer identity*

##### 4.1.1.1.1 *Searching for the essential*

Ever since I can remember, I was searching for what was essential to garments as well as to fashion. This search led me to design with primary forms and later with the most basic form of clothing, a piece of cloth. What it also did

it directed me towards clothing that is in the core of our modern day fashion, classics.

*Designing with primary forms:*

A collection of sculptures deriving from an exercise with primary forms, largely influenced my collection of re-designed classics, and illustrates well part of my designer identity.

My exploration of basic forms was done through collaging a circle, triangle, and a square linoleum models, imprinting them in various combinations on a cotton paper. These collages would serve me to explore the possibilities of pattern making with primary forms, which was a primitive way of creating garments. Through history, many other fashion designers have been designing based on them, such as; Madeleine Vionnet, Yuki, Issey Miyake, Yoshiaki Hishinuma, Isabel Toledo,...

A shown circle collage served as an inspiration for the collection of silhouettes of a piece of cloth. I recognized a part of a smaller circle overlapping the bigger, as a possible armhole of clothing. I later cut into a familiar armhole-like shape, sunk it in warm water, softening the cotton paper and achieved for it to resemble a cloth. I reached a collection of silhouettes of a piece of cloth by translating some of my collages in the same manner.

Inspired by the essential look of a „sculpture“ I created an entire collection of them portraying various drapes of a piece of cloth. A collection of sculptures was used as an inspiration and as silhouettes in the graduate collection.

FIGURE 3.

Circle collage, linoleum  
press on cotton paper,  
20x31,4 cm, 11/2016, 52/114.

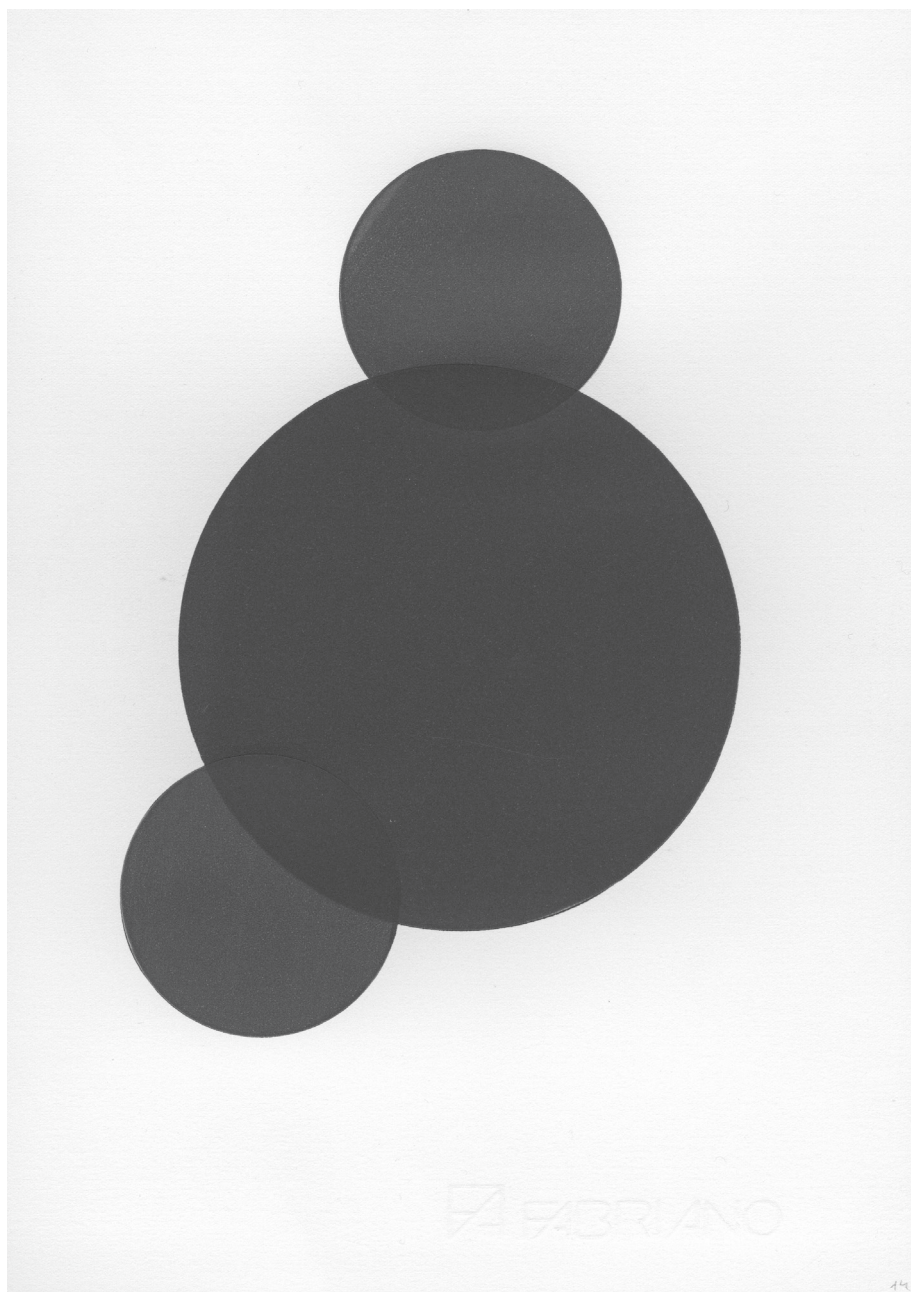


FIGURE 4.  
Translating circle collage  
into a silhouette, cotton  
paper, 5x8 cm, 12/2016.



TV 2017/1

FIGURE 5.  
Silhouette of a piece of cloth,  
water and cotton paper, 5x8 cm,  
12/2016, 1/27.



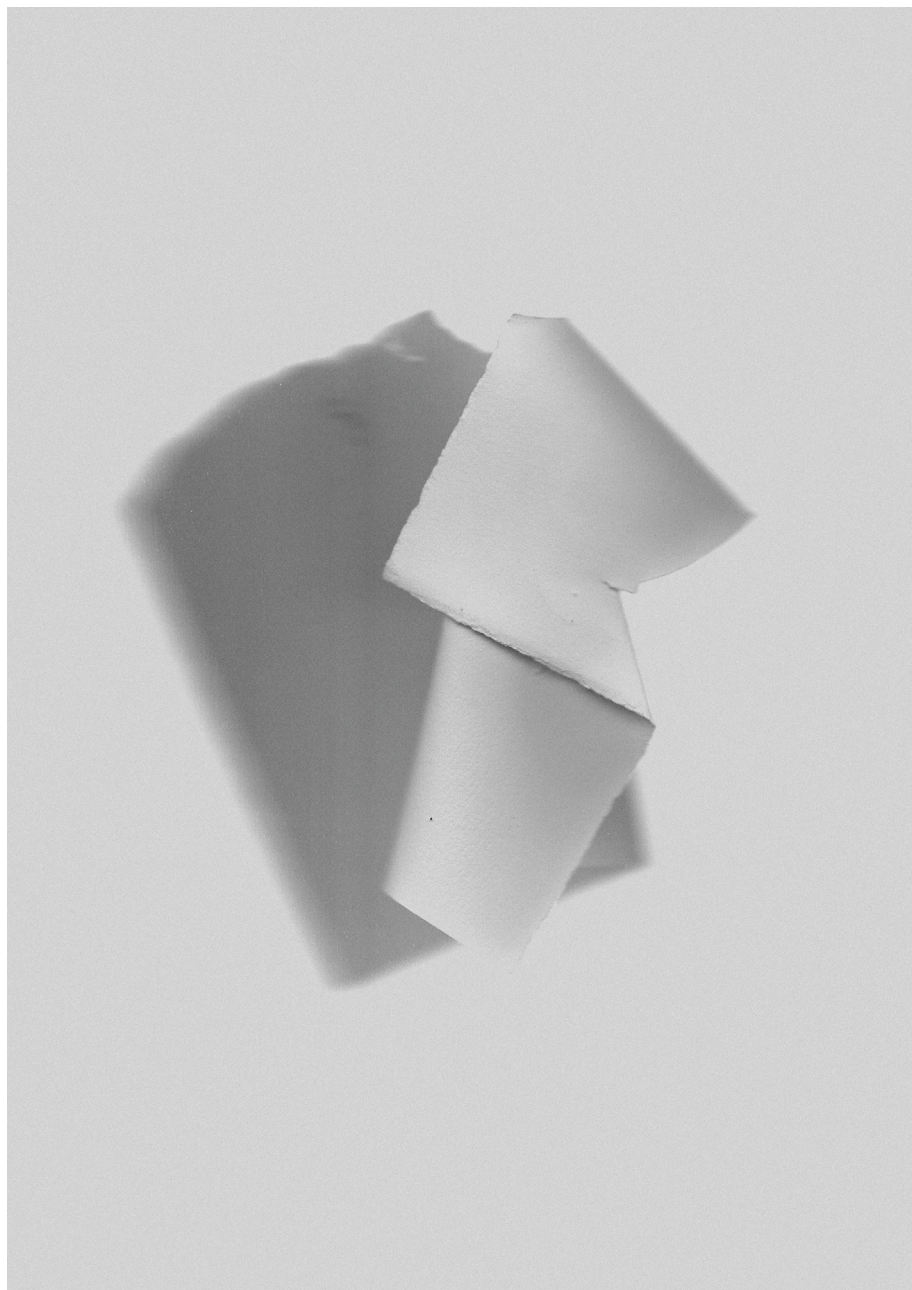
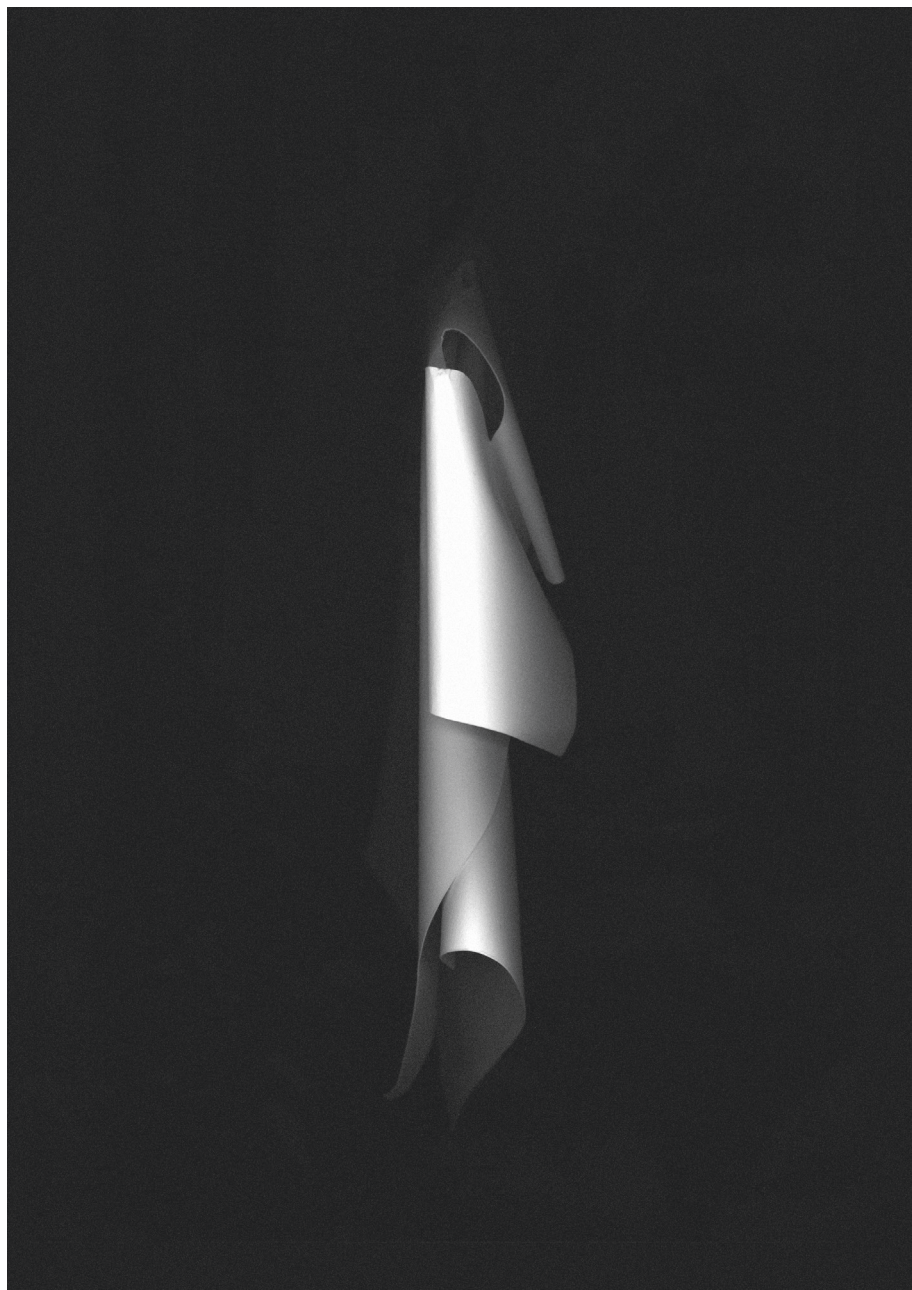


FIGURE 6.  
Silhouette of a piece of cloth,  
water and cotton paper,  
10,4x22,6 cm, 1/2017, 24/27.





## 4.1.2 Inspiration No. 2

### 4.1.2.1 *My first memories of classic wardrobe items*

My other inspiration in this graduate collection was classic wardrobe items. These were the items that gave me the same feeling of the essential, as a piece of cloth did. Furthermore, I was ever since I can remember, tremendously intrigued by their elegant feel, construction, practicality, and universal appeal. I choose to re-design garments such as a black woollen suit, a white shirt, denim trousers, and a jacket, a trench-coat, ... together with the silhouette of a piece of cloth.

Soon after starting to work with them, I noted that these garments reminded me of my first visits to the village tailors as well as of my grandfather. The thoughts affected my designing and prototyping process. I decided to embrace them, and create a collection of classic wardrobe items re-designed according to my first memories of them as well as my designer identity.

#### 4.1.2.1.1 *Memory No.1*

My grandfather's style seemed to be very classic and growing up I remember admiring his elegant style. My most vivid memory of his attire is him in a black suit. In his time, a black suit was a norm for working men as well as a synonym for men's elegance. My grandfather owned a couple of such suits, one for every day and one for Sunday. With it, he would, according to my grandmother, only wear white cotton shirts, a dark silk tie and carefully polished black leather shoes.

His wardrobe was full of classics in their purest form. In his youth, he was an admirer of black and white Hollywood movies. Accordingly, he dressed in the fashion of the then famous movie stars and owned a pair of Levi's 501 as well as a beige trench-coat.

FIGURE 7.

Photo of my grandfather  
in a company ca. 1968.

FIGURE 8.

Grandfather Franc ca. 1975.









#### 4.1.2.1.2 Memory No.2

In addition, a memory of my first encounter with clothing was revived, that was always too big for my body since I was a very skinny child. I was often dressed in oversized upper garments and regularly went to fit new trousers to the village tailors. Together we created darts and tried to make them as invisible as possible, however, we did not always succeed in making them unseen.

The memory of my first denim trousers that being too big for me and having to be fitted at the tailors' inspired oversized silhouettes and fitted garments in my collections. The size of my oversized garments is that of my grandfather, which is men's 56. While his style also reflects in a certain kind of elegance and mood of a collection.

Both the strong presence of my grandfather and a village tailor in my childhood caused my early exposure to the craft of tailoring as well as my fascination with it and consequently with classic wardrobe items. What I have seen around me on Sundays or at the tailor's atelier, was what I thought elegance and fashion is.

FIGURE 9.  
My fitted denim  
trousers, ca. 1998.



FIGURE 10.

Photo of me on the far right  
and my friends, wearing  
those same jeans, ca. 1998.





### 4.1.3 The process of re-designing classic wardrobe items

A black woollen suit, denim trousers and a jacket, a trench-coat, white shirt, pencil skirt, and a little black dress are items that I chose to re-design according to my first memories of them and a collection of sculptures of a piece of cloth.

### 4.1.4 A black woollen suit

A suit is created out of a men's pattern, size 56. Although pattern base is men's, its closing was designed as women's and a chest pocket was relocated to the right side. Such elements were chosen to neutralize masculine look of the garment.

I created two variations of an oversized suit, one single and another one double-breasted, both with a narrow lapel. Wool that I chose was black and was winter heavy. The decision for selecting thicker wool instead of thinner came from an inspiration of thick cotton paper sculptures which this collection was partially inspired by. The fixation with the sculptures' particular volume is evident throughout my collection of re-designed classic garments.

A way in which I interpreted a piece of cloth in a pair of suits, was by deconstructing a suit and merging it with a piece of cloth. First, I opened the suit at its side seams and darts, second I covered it with a piece of cloth and finally started pulled the cloth through the opened seams and darts. I have been cutting and adjusting these visible parts of the cloth and finally created two different variations of it.

A material used for it was a cupro underlining. Among other qualities, such as it's an ability to iron well, Cupro was my village tailors favourite underlining. However, the reason for choosing underlining at all was that it is a material naturally a part of a suit. I have created a separate pattern for the bits of underlining visible and inserted them in the base of an oversized woollen suit. I finished the inside with the same underlining. The parts of visible cupro under-

lining were bonded two times with a thin black fusible on the inside to achieve the desired volume.

The pants were also men's, oversized (56), black and woollen with a one-sided fold aiming towards the pockets. I fitted the pants according to my memory and instinct which created darts on both sides of the front starting at the front fold. The back of the pants, when fitted to a size 36, lifted to the middle of the back. Because of the curve that the back forms I have taken in the pants pattern according to it in the mid back. Furthermore, the back pockets reached the front. I created two styles of the oversized and fitted woollen pants.

FIGURE 11.

The initial prototype of a black woollen suit; jacket size 56 merged with a cloth of underlining, 1/2017, 1/6.



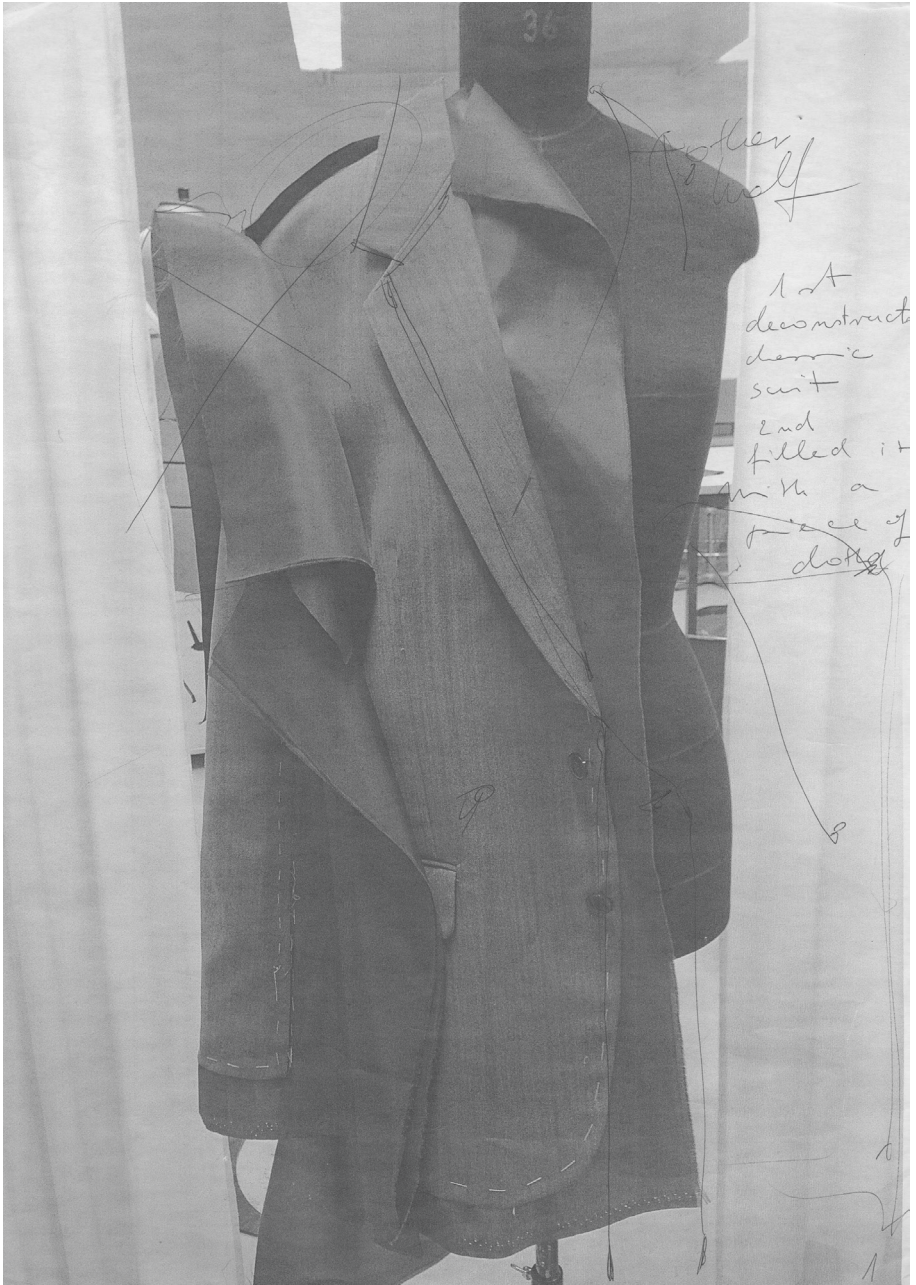


FIGURE 12.  
One of two chosen prototypes;  
woollen jacket size 56 with adjusted  
underlining cloth, 4/2017, 4/7.

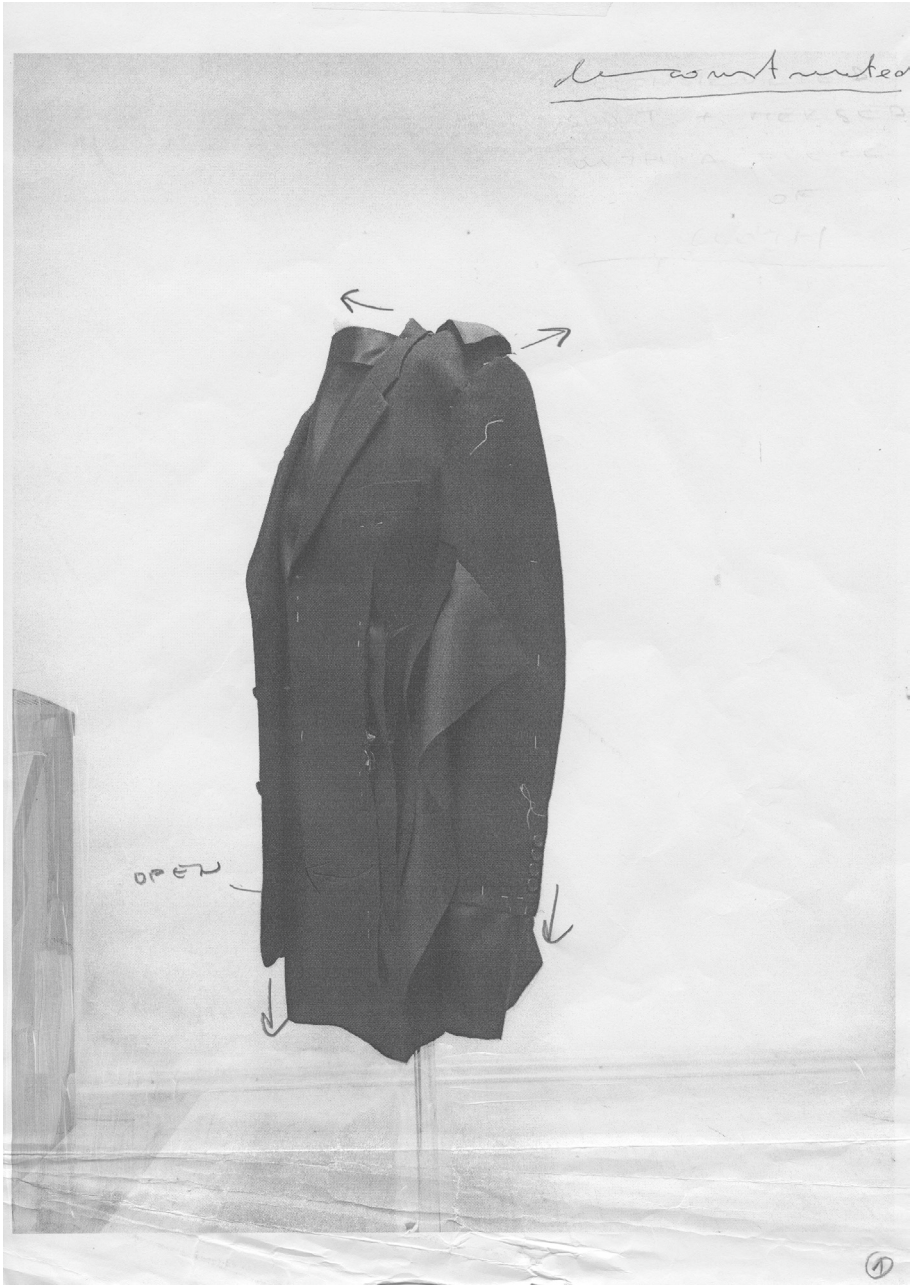
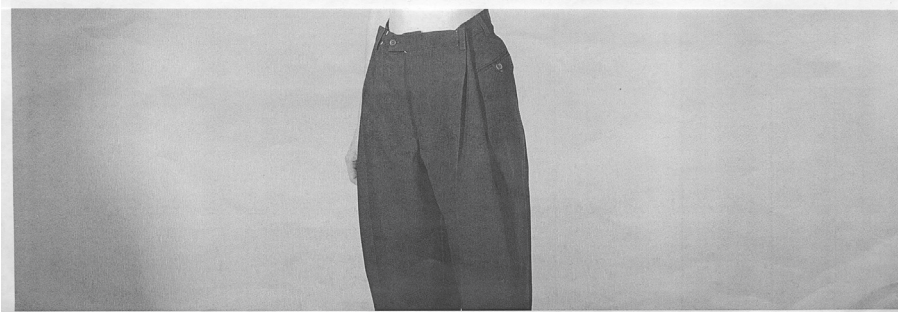
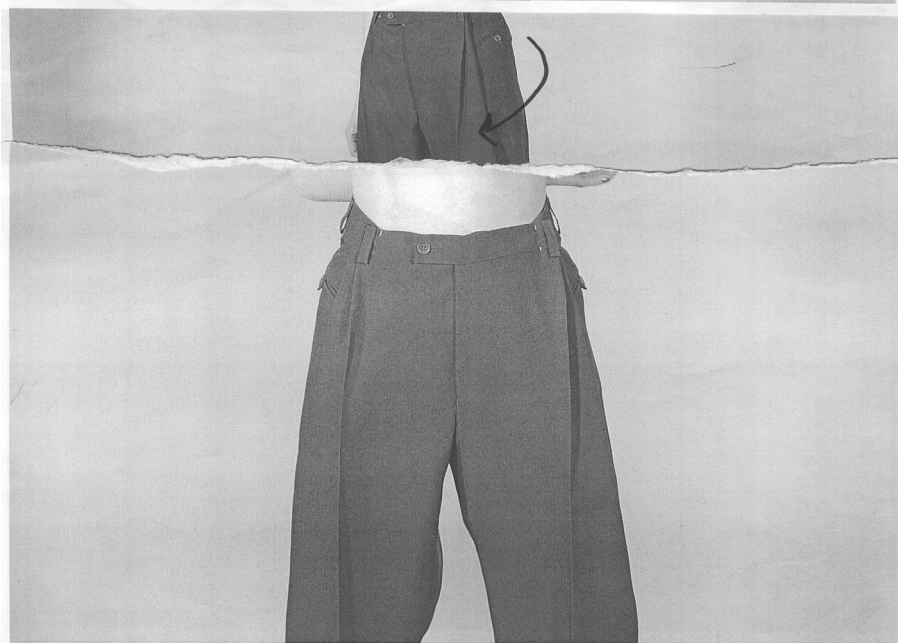


FIGURE 13.

Woollen trousers with front fold;  
fitted prototype, 1/2017, 2/4.







## 4.1.5 A denim jacket and trousers

I approached designing of a denim jacket with the same inspiration as other wardrobe items only with a different approach to it. For the first version of a denim jacket, I created a handkerchief inspired jacket. I opened the side seams of a jacket, spread it flat over a square-shaped cloth matching the edges of a jacket with that of a primary form. The base for a trucker jacket was men's 56, however, the closing of it was created as women's. I kept most of the details of a classic denim jacket intact only modifying its shape.

For the second version of a jacket, I turned an oversized men's jacket inside out, fitting it to a women's size 36. I created a women's closing and an asymmetric and smaller fit of a jacket by folding the buttoned side of the placket.

The pants were size 56 and fitted to women's 36 from the waist to the knees on one side, and to the mid-thighs on the other. The jeans were cut open from the bottom to the end of the darts to simulate a piece of cloth.

The material used was an indigo, raw cotton denim of a high thickness. For the second version of a denim outfit, denim was used with its inside out on the denim trousers, complementing a similarly designed denim jacket.

FIGURE 14.  
Handkerchief inspired denim  
jacket with fitted denim  
trousers cut open, 5/2017, 7/7.



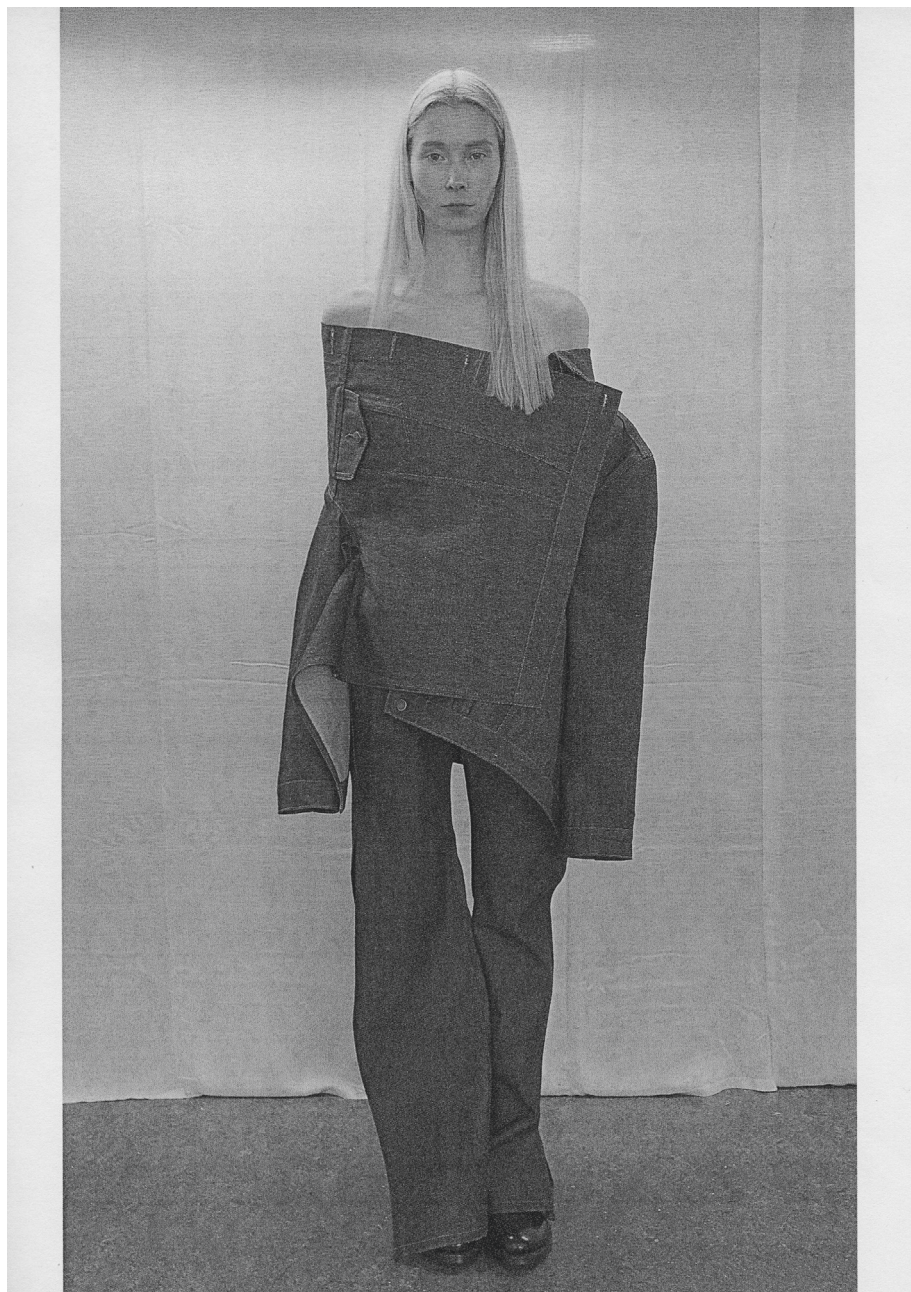


FIGURE 15.

A prototype of denim trousers  
size 56 fitted to women's 36;  
3/2017, 3/6.



FIGURE 16.  
Detail of fitted denim pants;  
chosen for realization,  
3/2017, 3/6.





FIGURE 17.

A prototype of a denim  
jacket No.2, 4/2017, 3/3.







## 4.1.6 Trench coat, a white shirt and a pencil skirt

A trench-coat size 56 is a replica of the one found at a recycling centre for the purposes of prototyping. What I changed was for it to have a women's closing and a flap on the right side instead of left. I wished to approach its re-designing according to my inspirations, however from a different angle than before. I have achieved a feeling of a piece of cloth by cutting into it instead of adding a material to it. What I did is, cut the cut open above the vent in the mid back towards the side seams of a coat. A vent was able to be buttoned. When unbuttoned the two sides of the lower back of the trench-coat would open and give a feeling of the extra material. Through this opening, the elongated back of a white shirt would then show. A white cotton poplin shirt with an elongated back was created from the same pattern base as other garments in the collection. Its form was directly inspired by the silhouettes of sculptures. Its details such as closing and a chest pocket were all women's. Meaning that the pocket was on the right side of the chest. On it, I used a starch when ironing to achieve a volume as suggested by the cotton paper sculptures.

A skirt was a classic black woollen pencil skirt with a vent. However, it was oversized and fitted on one side of the hip. The access material created a fold on the side. The skirt was also designed back to front, therefore its back vent showed on front. A material used for a skirt was black wool, same as used for a couple of suits. Also, it had relocated seams.

FIGURE 18.

A prototype of a trench  
coat merged with a cloth of  
underlining, 3/2017, 5/12.



FIGURE 19.  
Side details of a trench  
coat prototype, 3/17, 5/12.

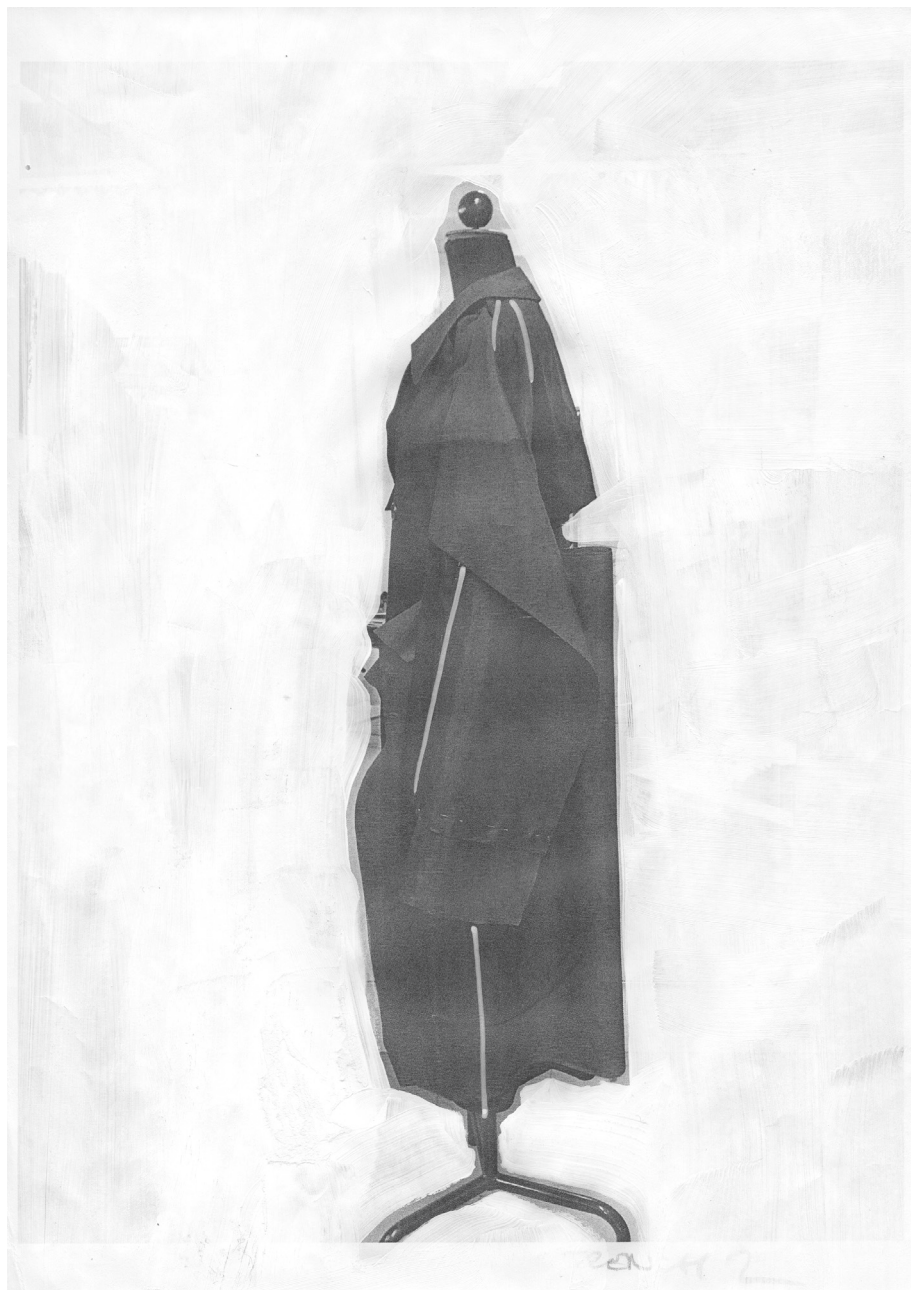


FIGURE 20.  
Trench, chosen prototype;  
cut-away, 3/2017, 12/12.



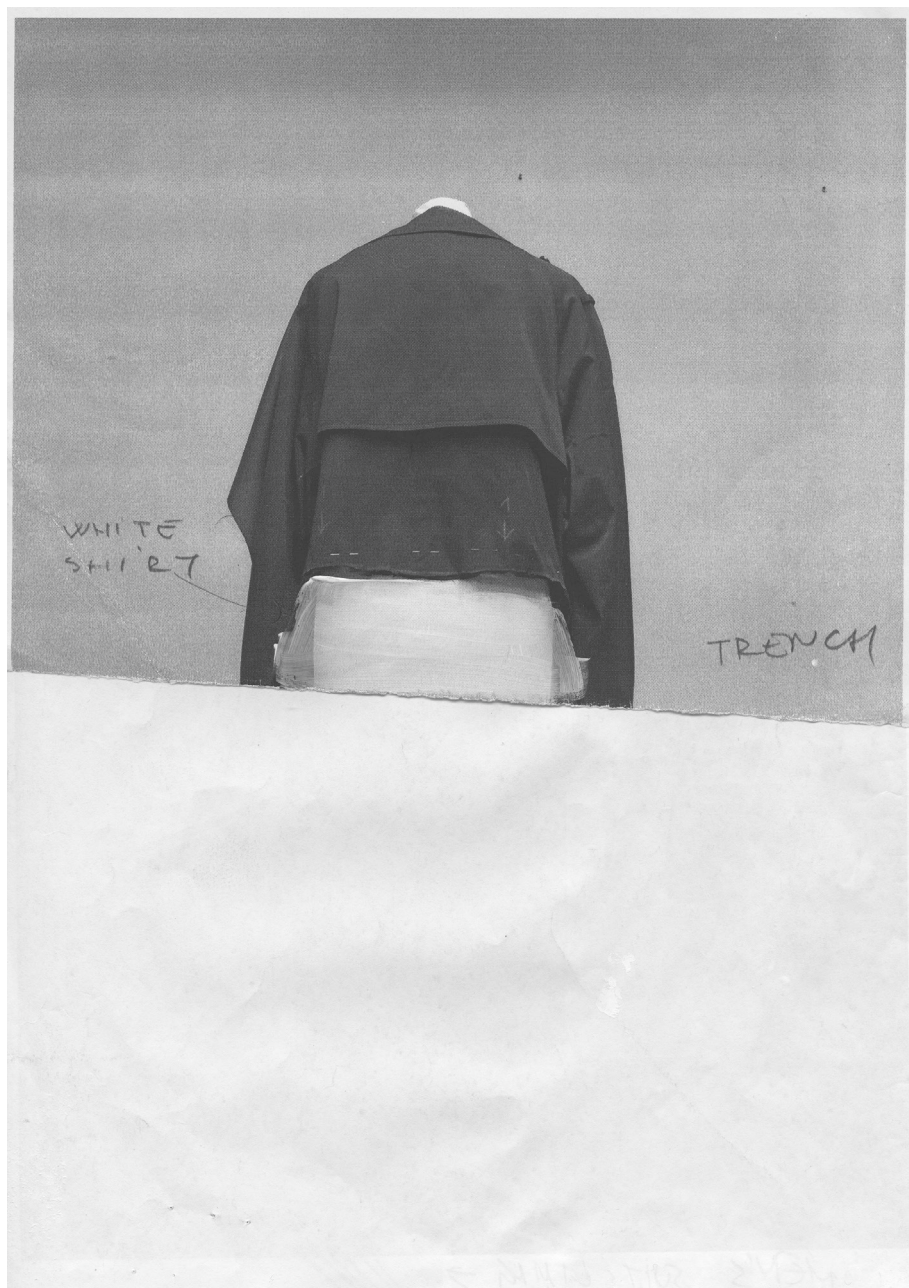


FIGURE 21.  
Sketch for the re-design of  
a white shirt, 3/2017.







## 4.1.7 A dress

Two dresses are based on a men's pattern size 56. They consist of a top and bottom, which is a skirt. A skirt is oversized and fitted on one side of one hip. Side seams of the skirt are moved to create a seam-detail in front and an asymmetric feel. A top is a literal translation of a collection of sculptures into a garment. The top is, therefore, a tailored piece of cloth. While its pattern base is very much oversized, a top is fitted in the front and back and has side seams. A color magenta and emerald green derive from a coloring exercise and the memory of my grandmother's pink and green satin gowns. Colors were chosen and interpreted brighter to create what I thought was a more contemporary shade. A 100% silk satin was selected to which I furthermore added brightness with two layers of a thin white fusible. The effect that this also gave was a certain thickness resembling the sculptures of cloth from which the dresses derive.

FIGURE 22.  
Chosen prototype of a tailored  
piece of cloth, 5/2017, 7/7.

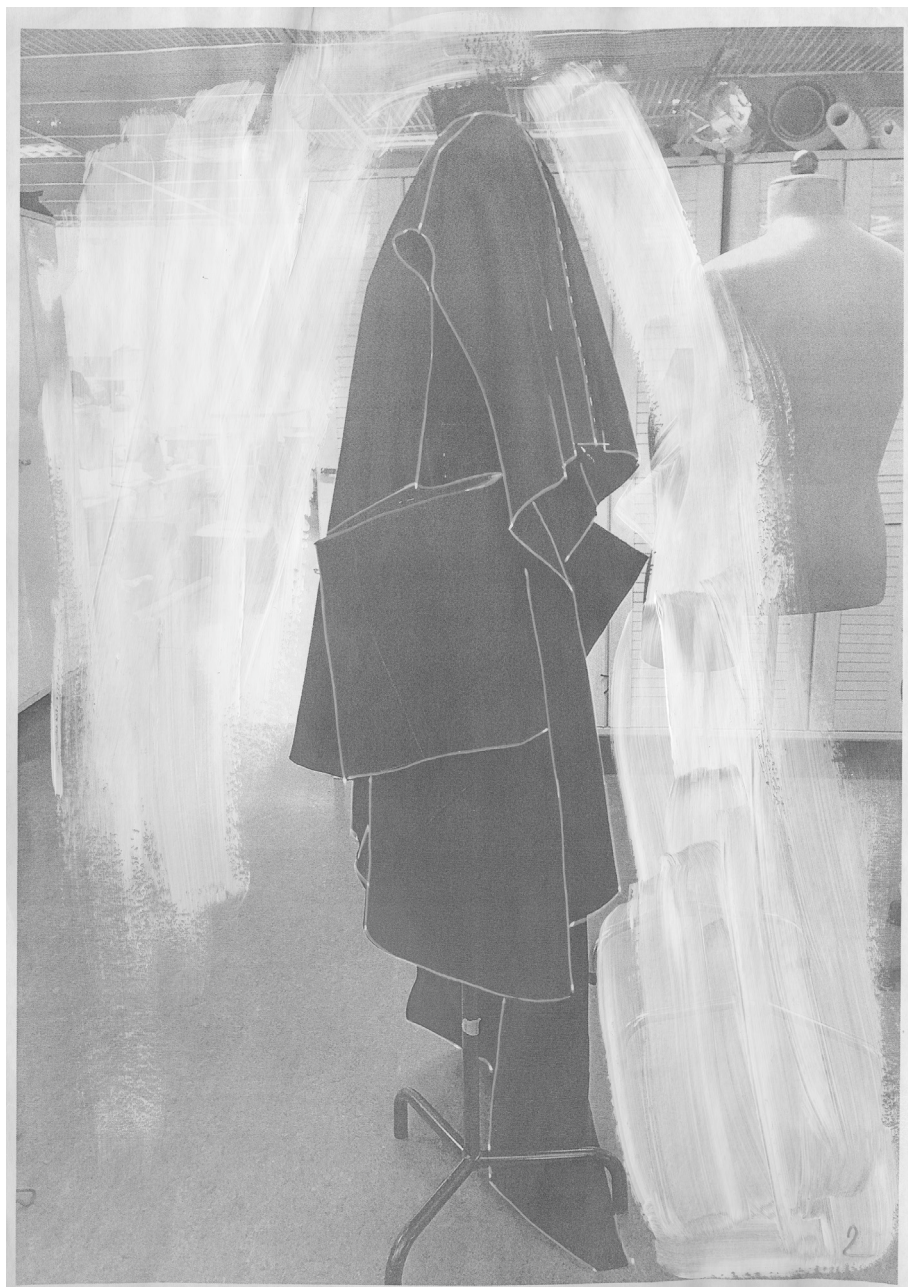


FIGURE 23.

A tailored piece of cloth used for  
a satin dress, 4/2017, 5/7.







# Chapter 5

## 5.1 Outcome

### 5.1.1 Fashion collection presentation

#### 5.1.1.1 *Collection in photographs*

The collection consists of 7 outfits; two variations of a classic woollen suit, two pieces of denim trousers and denim trucker jackets, a version of a trench-coat, a white shirt, a pencil skirt, and two dresses. In the following chapter, a collection is presented in photographs.

FIGURE 24.  
Suit jacket No.1.



FIGURE 25.  
Suit jacket No.2.





FIGURE 26.  
Denim jacket No.1.



FIGURE 27.  
Denim jacket No.2.





FIGURE 28.  
Trench coat and a white shirt,  $\frac{3}{4}$  view.



FIGURE 29.  
Trench coat and a white shirt,  $\frac{3}{4}$  view.





FIGURE 30.  
Satin dress No.1, detail,  
emerald green.



FIGURE 31.  
Satin dress No.1,  $\frac{3}{4}$  view,  
emerald green.



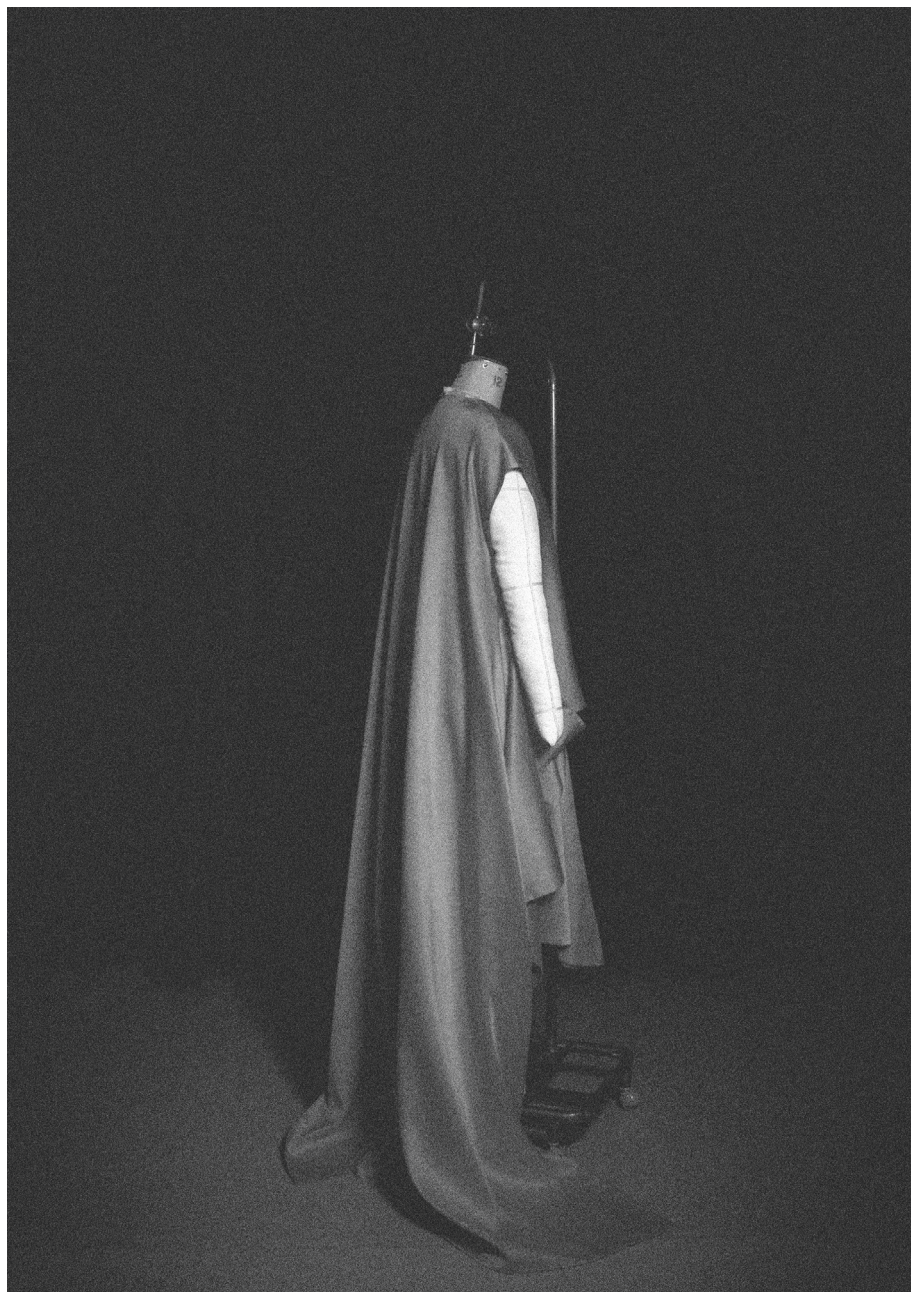


FIGURE 32.  
Satin dress No.2,  
magenta pink.



FIGURE 33.  
Satin dress No.2,  $\frac{3}{4}$  view,  
magenta pink.







## 5.1.1.2 Näytös'17

A graduate collection was an opening collection of Näytös'17, Aalto University's FaCT annual fashion show. A collection was presented by women of different age and with a strong and influential personality. Marjatta Nissinen, Niina Kurkinen, Pipsa Hurmerinta, Ainur Turisbek, Linea Rimberg, Daniela Kervauori and Kirsi Pyrhonen, emphasized timelessness and universality of classic wardrobe items, as well as a space left for wearers personality. The special casting was made possible by Jasmin Islamović and mentor Tuomas Laitinen.

FIGURE 34.  
Marjatta Nissinen wearing an  
opening look of „Näytös17“  
captured by Diana Luganski.



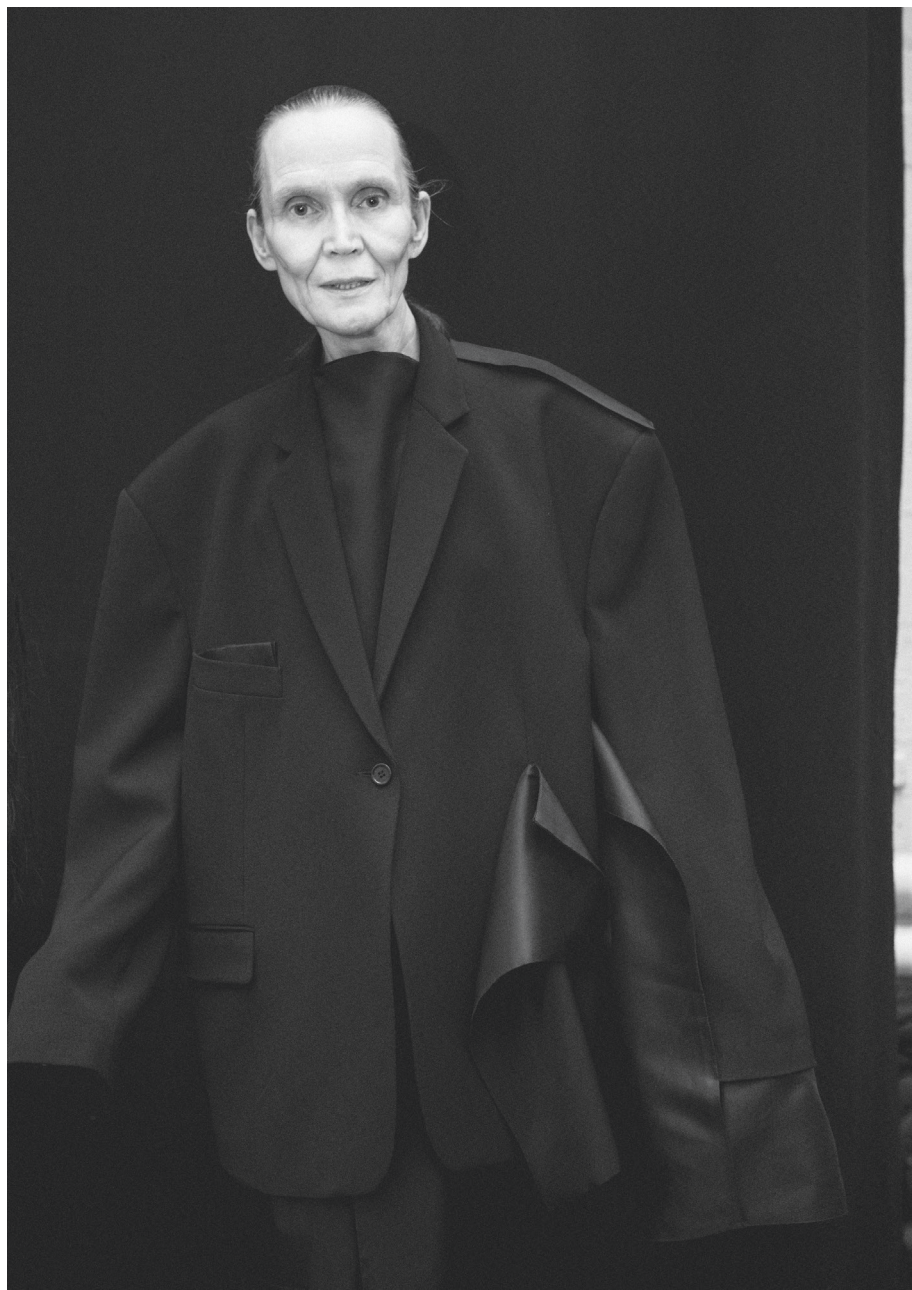


FIGURE 35.  
Niina Kurkinen captured  
by Diana Luganski.



FIGURE 36.  
Ainur Turibsek captured  
by Diana Luganski.





FIGURE 37.  
Pipsa Hurmerinta captured  
by Andre Pozusis.







## 5.2 Discussion

*Classic wardrobe items:*

My first findings from the theoretical research are focused on classics in arts and they suggest that classics are the works of art of particular quality, are universal, timeless, and able to adopt styles of different artists and eras while essentially remaining the same. My additional research suggests that classic wardrobe items might be called classic, for they carry characteristics of or similar to classic works of art. In classic works of art, I see the characteristic of »quality« as a consequence of a way of making that is mature, well handled, widely explored and adopted, which also contributes to a work of art's universality. Universality, I suggest is also enabled by the artist's handling of subjects common to a large group of people, even to people in different eras, which is causing its timelessness. The latter, I suggest is also attained through their space offered for their adaptation.

In classic wardrobe items, I similarly see »quality« as a certain maturity of a particular technique of making and it causing a certain functionality. Universal adoption of such garments, I see as a consequence of their functionality and a certain aesthetic common to many through time and space. Timelessness I believe is also partially caused by an ongoing wide appeal of that particular aesthetic, most likely due to its neutrality and consequent practicality and the desired sense of connectedness which it gives for being common. Similar to classic works of art, I suggest classic wardrobe items are able to take on different styles of different artists through different eras, which prolongs their life.

However, I also believe classic works of art in their initial form carry more of individuality of their artist, although that originality is to a large extent sacrificed to enable a wider understanding of the work, while in classic wardrobe such emphasis on individual aesthetic of their creator is further sacrificed to enable their functionality which determines their universal adoption. Classic works of art are also very often regarded as masterpieces, while we usually regard classic garments as everyday items. Similarly, there is many times a stronger emphasis on the authorship of a classic work of art than there is on a creator of a classic wardrobe item. However, that might be why they are so

widely worn and they serve so well as a blank slate for expression to us fashion designers.

*Re-designing of classic wardrobe items:*

Correspondingly, I found them perfect for carrying my designer expression. In my process of re-designing classic wardrobe items I have; In addition to practicing adding to them, been recognizing their essence, characteristics and a part available for re-designing. During the making of this thesis collection, I was searching for the answers to the following questions; How much can I take away from these garments for them to still be considered the same garments as they were before, therefore classic wardrobe items?, and similarly, how much can I re-design to still retain their identity and their classic characteristics? As well as, what happens if I don't keep enough of their identity?

Particularly in the first phase of prototyping, I was to some extent dealing with recognition of, what makes classic wardrobe items, therefore determining their essence. My particular tendency towards stripping garments of everything that is not essential to them, and my other visual inspiration, a piece of cloth, helped me reduce the unessential and find the parts that make them, them. Such prototyping exercise gave me the desired knowledge of integral parts of classic wardrobe items as well as some data of the space available for my re-interpretation of them. It was important for me to gain this information to be able to successfully re-design them and to retain their meaning; since their meaning was also what I wished to express.

However, so was expressing a personal visual language, which sometimes led me to push and even cross the limits of re-designing. While exploring the classics and prototyping them in accordance with my inspiration, such as my first memories of them, and a silhouette of a piece of cloth, I many times overstepped the space offered for re-designing. One could say that I was exploring the limits of such space. Enlarging this space naturally meant more of my personal expression and less of a classic garment. But, it also meant a loss of its classic characteristics. The garment that represents such loss, in my final collection, is a little black dress re-designed. Due to my desire for a fuller expression, I re-designed a selected classic to the extent that it is no longer little nor black. It is now fuchsia and emerald, which were the colors of my grand-

mother's favorite dresses, as well as exuberant and long, almost a literal translation of a sculptured cloth, representing well, my personal design aesthetic (See Figure 37 and 38).

While two of my dresses have gained in their individuality, they have lost in their classic quality - universality, and possibly also in a certain visual timelessness. For these dresses were no longer short and available for any occasion, but long and therefore appropriate only for specific occasions; as well as they were no longer colored in a neutral color such as black but to very specific colors.

FIGURE 38.  
Emerald green satin dress  
worn by Antonina Sedakova,  
2/2018.



FIGURE 39.  
Magenta satin dress worn  
by Antonina Sedakova,  
2/2018.









## 5.3 Conclusion

This thesis deals with the topic of classic wardrobe items and the phenomenon of their re-designs. Through it, my knowledge of the two phenomena is offered; as well as my proposition of their meaning for many and myself as a designer. The thesis results in a fashion collection of re-designed classic wardrobe items and in a literature review exploring classics in fashion through multiple perspectives.

This thesis has aimed to confirm existing classic garments as relevant for our time and my design work. It found them not only as both, significant for me and others, but as able to further reflect the times with designer contribution. For similar reasons, fashion designers have been practicing such re-designing of classic garments, over decades. These re-designs, in turn, illustrate and therefore help understand changes in our society as well as a designer's particular visual identity.

In this thesis, I furthermore suggest that classic wardrobe items give us a feeling of belonging for being so common. Lately, with globalization, the group wearing them grew bigger, and with it these item's particular unifying effect. In addition, they feel like a constant in our modern society and for that give us a sense of stability, one that we might especially gravitate towards in unstable times such as ours. They, therefore, connect us among ourselves and to our past generations wearing them.

I suggest classics are important for representing opposition to the current political atmosphere. Today, our political climate seems to be a lot about the distinction. As a negative effect of it, there is now a fair share of talk about separation, differentiation of one from another, in terms of nations, religion, race, and gender. Because of that, something that shows and exposes similarity is I believe more valuable than in some other times. By being so common classics oppose such climate. Feeling the need to react to it myself, what other clothing do I choose as a fashion designer, to express sameness and a tendency towards equality than garments such as classic?

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